

Xmas trees light up ... and The Brooklyn Paper team is there



Tom Gilbert GREENPOINT

"Apparently, there will soon be a ceremony in which this evergreen in McCaren Park will be covered in ornamentation."



Adam Hutton DUMBO

"This silver-colored metal structure showed up at the Pearl Street Triangle, an apparent reference to another seasonal holiday."



Gersh Kuntzman PARK SLOPE

"Thanks to my fifth grade math teacher, I know how to calculate the volume of this holiday cylinder at Grand Army Plaza."



Mike McLaughlin BOERUM HILL

"A closer examination of this stand-alone evergreen, at Atlantic and Bond, revealed lots of tiny white bulbs."



Joe Jordan BAY RIDGE

"My investigation proved that this object at Shore Road and 91st Street is indeed, a Christmas tree — not a holiday tree."

SNY
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2007

SHOP LOCAL! SEE HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE IN P.10-11

The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn's Real Newspaper

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AWR/20 pages • Vol. 30, No. 48 • Saturday, Dec. 8, 2007 • FREE



Suit: Beep's office biased

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

Borough President Markowitz used city-paid staffers as campaign workers and ignored "inappropriate sexual activity" by four of his employees, a new bombshell lawsuit by Markowitz's former spokeswoman contends.

Those claims represent the juicy nuggets in an otherwise unsensational age and gender discrimination lawsuit filed Monday in Brooklyn Supreme Court by Markowitz's former communications director, Regina Weiss. Virtually all of the 16-page filing sticks to the central allegation that Weiss, 50, was "discriminated against and [was] unlawfully discharged ... on the bases of her age and gender."

Specifically, Weiss's suit targets Markowitz's chief of staff, Greg Atkins. Weiss says Atkins forced her to resign in early 2006, despite glowing job-performance reviews from Markowitz himself.

Asked about the lawsuit, the borough president's office said, effectively, being it on.

"These unfounded claims should be taken in context — they are from a disgruntled former employee who was dismissed," the statement read. "If served with court papers, we will address these baseless allegations in court. This office stands by its excellent EEO [Equal Employment Opportunity] record."

See BIAS CLAIM on page 16

Joy on Duffield Deal saves 'Underground Railroad' home

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

The city has said it will redesign a park that is the centerpiece of its plan for Downtown Brooklyn after the owner of a home linked by historians to the Underground Railroad won a court settlement last week.

The house in question sits at 227 Duffield St., on what would have been the southwest corner of Willoughby Square Park — the 1.8-acre greenspace that city officials hope will be the Bryant Park-style heart of a newly booming Downtown Brooklyn.

In the settlement, the city promised it would "not seek to [condemn] 227 Duffield Street in conjunction with the Downtown Brooklyn Development Plan." Now that the building will remain, architects will be forced to carve out a niche in the park, said Janet Peterson, a spokeswoman for the city's Economic Development Corporation.

"It is premature to say" how exactly the settlement would affect the design of the park, since "designs have not begun yet," added Peterson.

But what is clear is that the owner of the house, Joy Chateau, has won a nearly four-year-long battle with the city over what critics have called an abuse of eminent domain.

The fight began in 2004, when the city



Duffield Street resident Joy Chateau shows a tunnel in her basement that she believes was used by fugitive slaves.

passed a major upzoning of Downtown Brooklyn that has ushered in a building boom throughout the area bounded by Flatbush Avenue Extension and Tillary, Jay and Fulton streets. At the center of that expansion was to be a new green space and with a parking garage underneath it: Willoughby Square Park.

In order to create the park, the city said it would have to condemn Chateau's property, and up to six other homes on Duffield Street and neighboring Gold Street. Preservationists criticized the city for ignoring evidence that the houses were once a stop on the Underground Railroad, the network that helped guide slaves to freedom.

Under intense pressure to preserve Chateau's home in particular, the city paid a consulting firm \$500,000 to study the homes' historic merit. That report, issued in April, claimed that 227 Duffield St. and the other homes were not part of the Underground Railroad — though the report was repudiated by two-thirds of its peer reviewers.

"There is overwhelming evidence ... of Abolitionist activity" at Chateau's house, archaeologist Cheryl LaRoche said at the time.

But Joe Chan, the president of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, countered in a statement that "Willoughby Square has always been the centerpiece of the [Downtown]

See DUFFIELD on page 5



Meet the menorahs

Jews around the world began the eight-day Hanukkah festival on Tuesday night by lighting menorahs — but Brooklyn Jews did it twice. First, Chabad of Brooklyn Heights lit the borough's "official" candelabrum (above) with Borough President Markowitz officiating at Borough Hall. Then, an hour later at Grand Army Plaza, Chabad of Brownstone Brooklyn set ablaze the "largest menorah in the borough" with an arguably even more special guest: Mr. Met (with Della Kishenblatt, left). Who knew he was Jewish? The holiday continues through Wednesday; the final candles will be lit on Tuesday night. See full coverage of the menorah matchup, on page 18.



GOOD DOG: This German shepherd scared the wits out of a mugger in Fort Greene, frightening him into dropping the purse he'd just taken.

DOG ON IT! Hero pooch hounds mugger

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

A Brooklyn dog earned his kibble the other night by chasing down a purse-snatcher on a Fort Greene avenue.

Tim, an 85-pound, 3-year-old German shepherd with a kindly demeanor, was taking his 7:30 pm constitutional near the corner of Clinton and DeKalb avenues with companion Nancy Peterson on Nov. 15 when a man walked by with what appeared to be a thick gold chain concealed under his jacket.

"And then I heard this woman behind me screaming and crying," recalled Peterson, the president of the Fort Greene PUPS. "I don't know how, but I knew he had stolen something from the woman."

And then Peterson got mad.

"I thought, 'How dare you do that to somebody in this neighborhood!'"

And so Peterson and Tim raced off after the apparent mugger, with Peterson screaming, "My dog will rip you apart!"

The irony, said Peterson, is that "Tim wouldn't even know how to do that." But looks — in this case, the killer glare of an animal best known as a Nazi accessory — do matter.

Afraid for his life, the young man dropped the item — the "gold chain" turned out to be the handle of the woman's bag that he had just snatched — to the sidewalk and kept running toward Lafayette Avenue.

The woman was so, so happy," said Peterson.

And Tim? Well, he walked home and had an otherwise normal evening.

Dyker man on YouTube ignites GOP fisticuffs over immigration

By Noah C. Zuss
for The Brooklyn Paper

A Dyker Heights man not only incited a debate about illegal immigration at last week's Republican debate, but he also thrust himself and his neighborhood into an international spotlight.

But that's Ernie Nardi for you. The 59-year-old Dyker resident proved that he's not afraid to take an unpopular position on a controversial issue when his pre-recorded question kicked off last week's Republican debate on CNN.

Nardi is a technician for the Madison Square Garden Network who has lived in Brooklyn his entire life. He feels that illegal immigration is changing the face of the city and believes that those there illegally are displacing legal citizens and contributing to our decline. He is angry that New York has become a safe-haven, and destination for illegal immigrants.

And get this: He's a registered Democrat.

The question that began the debate featured Nardi in a YouTube video, his white-

haired head covering 70 percent of the screen and a TV with rabbit ears in the background, criticizing former Mayor Giuliani for running a "sanctuary city" for immigrants during his time atop New York's bureaucracy.

"This is Ernie Nardi from Dyker Heights in Brooklyn, New York," he started, his accent unmistakable to anyone who has seen even one Scorsese movie. (You'll find a link to his YouTube video at BrooklynPaper.com.)

"If you become president, will you continue to aid and abet ... illegal aliens coming into this country?" he concluded, practically



Ernie Nardi on YouTube.

barking out the final words.

The question did put Giuliani on the defensive and allowed a rival, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, to attack with what political insiders might have called "The Nardi Gambit." But after a few minutes of back-and-forth — Giuliani accused Romney of hiring illegal aliens at the governor's mansion, Romney accused Giuliani of ignoring the central crime of undocumented workers, namely, that they're here illegally — the nation moved on.

But not Nardi.

"Rudy Giuliani just lied to you," he said in a response that was not, alas, part of the YouTube clip.

He's still angry. Nardi says that he chose to speak up because of how Giuliani, as well as his predecessors, dealt with illegal immigration. He claims that there is a "total lack of media coverage and lack of enforcement from Bloomberg, Giuliani, Dinwiddie, and all the way back to Koch. People are sick and tired and the situation has been festering for

See YOUTUBE on page 16

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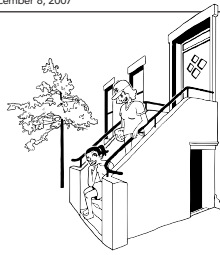
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THE STOOP

NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT

Is O'Malley really evil?

Until Monday, baseball had been admirably reluctant to admit former Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley — the man who uprooted part of Brooklyn's soul by taking Dem Bums to Los Angeles in 1957 — into its Hall of Fame.

O'Malley, of course, was once an immensely hated figure in these parts. According to the well-known anecdote, during the 1960s New York journalists Pete Hamill and Jack Newfield decided to make separate lists of the 10 worst human beings in history. When the lists were compared, the top three were the same: Hitler, Stalin and Walter O'Malley.

Today, some of the hard feelings have softened. Some of its even entertain revisionist theories that assign responsibility for the Dodgers' loss to Mayor Wagner or Robert Moses.

Before we decide if having to look at a bronze version of O'Malley's jowly face every time we drive the kids up to Cooperstown is an unforgivable insult to Brooklyn or no big deal, let's look at the case made by his supporters.

• O'Malley is the owner who brought the major leagues to the West Coast and made America's pastime truly national.

• He had something to do with the Dodgers' integrating baseball by signing Jackie Robinson.

• He made a lot of money in Los Angeles and the Dodgers won a lot of pennants there.

• He did not want to move the Dodgers out of Brooklyn. He had to, because rascally politicians would not help him build a new park to replace Ebbets Field.

And now, the facts: The second point is easily dismissed. O'Malley was a powerless minority owner when Dodgers president Branch Rickey — his arch-enemy — signed Robinson and broke the National League's color line in 1947.

Ditto the third point: The Dodgers were also a very good team that won a lot of pennants and made a lot of money before O'Malley took them to La La land.

As to the first and last points, you must remember that in the 1950s the owners, as they do now, enjoyed a legal monopoly that allowed them to divvy up the nation's baseball markets amongst themselves. This has almost guaranteed their profitability, as it would for any company with a popular product that faced virtually no competition.

Dipping into their own deep pockets, an earlier generation of baseball magnates had built most of the existing major league baseball parks, including Tiger Stadium, Forbes Field, Fenway Park and Ebbets Field. From the 1950s through the 1970s, these parks became too small, run-down, obsolete.

At the same time, America's population center was moving toward the south and west, away from the northeastern quadrant, where all of baseball's major league teams were located. The wily owners hit upon the idea of extorting local governments to build them brand-new ballparks by threatening to relocate to a neglected market such as L.A., Atlanta, or San Francisco.

Some, like the Braves, did in fact move, and there were enough cities left, including all those sunny, tantalizing Pacific Coast League towns, that lots of other owners could get into the act.

The result was that local taxpayers handed rich baseball owners free new ballparks in Baltimore, Milwaukee, New York, Kansas City, Philadelphia and almost everywhere else. The "give me a free park or I'll move" game was played until a decade or so ago, when baseball finally used up its supply of uncultivated markets.

The result? Presto, change-o, major league clubs from the Brewers to the Mets to the Yankees are once again building ballparks with their own money.

It is no reason O'Malley lost the game and moved to California city and had no control over its own purse strings, it could not be blackmailed into building, or subsidizing the land for, a new ballpark for the Dodgers. As much as the people of Brooklyn might have wanted their tax dollars to go for such a purpose, the city's all-powerful Board of Estimate felt no particular pressure to help pay for a facility that would be used almost exclusively by one of the five boroughs.

Look for Part II of Tom Gilbert's story next week and find out whether O'Malley could have actually stayed in Brooklyn and whether his admission to Cooperstown is an insult to Brooklyn.

Gilbert is a writer and baseball historian who lives in Greenpoint.

BESIDE THE POINT



Tom Gilbert



This former police stationhouse on Poplar Street will not be developed into apartments, but rented out to a school or learning center, the owner now says.

Precinct house won't be homes

By Adam F. Hutton
The Brooklyn Paper

The owner of a century-old former NYPD stationhouse in Brooklyn Heights has scrapped his plans to convert the building into apartments, and two schools are vying to lease the long dormant space in its entirety.

New residential development in DUMBO has caused the student body at nearby PS 8 to grow exponentially in the last two years, said Brooklyn Heights Association Executive Director Judy Stanton. With almost 500 students enrolled, the school has

reached its capacity and needs to expand. Similarly, the League Treatment Center, which has provided education and treatment for children and adults with learning disabilities and emotional problems since 1953, needs more space to continue its programs and is planning to move from its DUMBO location at 30 Washington St. when its current lease expires.

Both schools have expressed an interest in leasing the circa-1913 precinct house, owned by Regal Investments, which acquired the 72 Poplar St. building at a 2004 city auction for \$9.6 million.

Maurice Lazor, Regal's owner, bought

the building without knowing that it was within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District, which barred him from building anything over 50 feet or altering the facade in any way.

In 2005, Lazor briefly put the stationhouse on the market with an asking price of \$15 million. He quickly changed his mind and continued to gut the interior for residential purposes.

Now that those renovations are substantially complete, Lazor wants to rent the 30,000-square-foot building to a single tenant, said Bill Punch, a partner and spokesman for Regal Investments.

New space is a scofflaw paradise

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

A Montague Street business group's attempt to make it easier for ambulance drivers to drop off patients at a clinic on the street is being stymied by the very agency that helped set up the parking in the first place — the Department of Transportation.

As this not-so-shocking photo shows, a DOT car was parked the other day in the "Access-a-Ride Bus Stop" in front of 189 Montague St., a building housing several Long Island College Hospital Clinics.

The DOT had only just helped the Montague Street Business Improvement District create the space so that ambulance drivers would not need to double-park and block traffic while they discharge their cane-wielding patients in the middle of the street.

"We were so happy that DOT set up the space for us — in fact, they did it without much



DOT's wrong: The Montague Street BID fought to get an "ambulette parking only" zone, but it is often occupied by city cars.

hassle at all," said Chelsea Mauldin, executive director of the Montague Street BID.

in that space," she added, referring to city and state permit-bearing cars parking in the newly created space.

"The other day, there was even an NYPD car in there," Mauldin said.

Mauldin reiterated that she was pleased by the way in which DOT and New York City Transit, which regulates ambulances, worked together to create the spot — but said she was now working with the NYPD to ensure that the space remain uncoccupied so that it can be available when needed.

The Brooklyn Paper's photo speaks for itself — but not for the Department of Transportation, which sent over a statement expressing its concern that its employees and others were missing the space.

"We are glad to provide parking for the ambulette service," the statement said. "This DOT vehicle was illegally parked ... and we are taking steps to prevent future occurrences."

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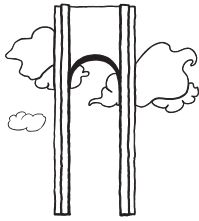
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THE STOOP

BAY RIDGE-BENSONHURST DYKER HEIGHTS
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Evil O'Malley is in the Hall

They're putting the biggest bum of 'em all in the Hall. On Monday, Major League Baseball's Veterans Committee elected Hall of Famer O'Malley, whose name will live on in villainy forever thanks to his decision to move the Dodgers to Los Angeles, to the Hall of Fame.

It's safe to say that very few votes came from this borough. "The man was a traitor who only cared about making as much money as he could," said Ridge teacher and lifelong Brooklyn Dodgers fan Richard Montalbano. "Hall of Shame, yes, but Hall of Fame, no. The guy is a bum and he'll always be a bum."

"I'll never visit the Hall of Fame so long as I live," added Montalbano.

Another longtime resident did plan on visiting the Hall, albeit as something of a notch above a spectator.

"I plan to be at the ceremony next July just to yell out, 'Rot in hell, O'Malley,' at the most opportune times," posted Rabbi-

man on Bayridge.com. O'Malley moved the team after the 1957 season. The residents of Bay Ridge were hit especially hard because a number of players lived in Bay Ridge during the season, including Pee Wee Reese, who lived on Barwell Terrace and 97th Street; Duke Snider, who lived on Marine Avenue between 97th and 98th streets; Carl Erskine, who lived on Lafayette Walk and 94th Street; Roger Craig, who lived on Colonial Road between 68th and 69th streets; Danny McDevitt, who lived on Colonial Road between 70th and 71st streets.

In addition, Carl Spooner worked in the off season at Marathon Motors on the corner of 69th Street and Fourth Avenue and Ruben Walker lived on 76th Street between Colonial Road and Ridge Boulevard. There are even rumors that real-estate brokers refused to show Jackie Robinson houses in Bay Ridge.

No wonder how easy it was to hate O'Malley. From the 1930s until the late 1950s, living in Bay Ridge meant always having the possibility of running into Pee Wee Reese getting a cup of coffee or Carl Erskine shoveling snow.

And one man took it all away from you. No wonder people still tell the old joke, "If Stalin, Hitler and O'Malley are in a room and you only have two bullets, who do you kill? Answer: You shoot O'Malley twice, just to make sure he's dead!"

"There was blood on the streets," said Jerry Polizzi, whose art supply store bearing his name is located on 7813 Third Ave. "They cursed him up and down."

To locals, O'Malley chose money over memories when he moved the Bums to L.A. after he couldn't squeeze the city for a new stadium. The hatred runs deep, so deep in fact, that it spans generations.

Bob Nevin worked as a young ticket taker at Ebbets Field for 50 cents a day. His family was torn at O'Malley's cold-hearted move, but his experience also shows that the oft-repeated adage that O'Malley drained all of the borough's joy isn't exactly true.

"My father, my mother, my brother, my sister, they were all in tears," said Nevin from his bar seat at O'Sullivan's Bar on Third Avenue. "All but me — I'm a Yankees fan so I couldn't stop laughing."

Matthew Lysiak is a writer who lives in Bay Ridge.

YELLOW HOOKER



Matthew Lysiak



Repairs on the Verrazano Bridge have some drivers wishing they had a cannon.

Bridge fix driving 'em nuts!

By Noah C. Zuss
for The Brooklyn Paper

Traffic from the ongoing restoration of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge has caused intense gridlock on local streets around the span — and at least one businessman says he's losing a fortune because of it.

"I am losing tens of thousands of dollars a year from late deliveries, gas costs, and increased commute times," said Greg Ahl, owner of a technology services and communications company. "It's incredibly frustrating be-

cause it makes it a lot tougher for small businesses to survive."

Ahl was one of dozens of people who flocked to a town hall-style meeting on Tuesday night, which state Sen. Mary Golden (R-Bay Ridge) hosted for the very purpose of hearing community frustration about the six-month old project.

"It's just a terrible situation and the traffic is a real danger," said homeowner Elaine O'Rourke, who has lived on Battery Place for over 25 years and never seen it "this bad."

"We can't even do normal things anymore. Like order food to be delivered or get medicines to the house," she added. "There is just no escape from the traffic most of the time and I feel that it is taking away our quality of life."

Golden shared his frustration with the pace and scope of the \$58-million project. "I was speaking with a lawyer from Bay Ridge recently and he said it took him 37 minutes to go from 91st to 92nd on a local avenue," Golden said. "To go one block, that's just a terrible situation. That's a serious impact, and

it's not fair to the community, we need to work to get something done."

Possible interim solutions suggested by Golden include changing bridge work hours to off-peak travel times, opening a west-bound high-occupancy vehicle lane on the Staten Island expressway, and increasing the number of traffic agents on the ground to reduce major backups at crucial intersections.

Joe Ferrara, the project's general manager for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, did not offer any specific plans for relief, but said the agency is studying the problem and working with consultants to get it solved.

Ferrara took potshots from the crowd for more than an hour, but the closer he came to offering any hope for relief was when he mentioned that 50 million had been added to the project as an incentive to speed it up so that it will be completed by September, a few months early.

Those months of relief did little to assuage local anger. To get the issue more political visibility, several politicians have used the MTA to force it to provide some relief.

The suit is pending, but this week, State Supreme Court Judge Phil Minardo asked all parties to return to court on Dec. 18 to discuss possible traffic relief measures.



Residents demonstrate how they feel about the odor along Fort Hamilton Parkway.

DEP's fresh idea stinks up Ridge

By Matthew Lysiak
for The Brooklyn Paper

Move over Dior, Chanel, and Ellen Tracy, the Department of Environmental Protection has unleashed a new perfume just in time for the holiday season and residents are giving it a big "thumbs up" — up their noses to plug up the stench.

Since last summer, that unmistakable odor of sewage has been creeping out of catch basins along Fort Hamilton Parkway between Marine Avenue and 99th Street. After residents complained, DEP odor experts last week dropped nylon socks filled with pine deodorizer.

But it hasn't helped!

"The stench is absolutely repugnant," said odor weary resident Fred Birkenfelz, who attends the senior center at St. John's Church on the street of the offending scent. "I've been

dealing with this smell for over a year, and let me tell you it is quite potent." In fact, locals now say that the fresh scent of pine has made the raw sewage smell even worse.

"I think adding the pine made the existing smell even more potent," said Aaron Green who lives in an apartment building near the offending odor.

See **STINK** on page 7

THE KITCHEN SINK

On Dec. 22, the **Canny Brothers**, a Dyker Heights musical band of brothers, will be heading their last gig of the year at **Belly Bunion** at 9510 Third Ave. The band is fast becoming a frequent staple at Irish pubs and local radio stations across the city. Better catch them before they aren't so local. ... Another local musician, **Frankie Morra**, has launched a Web site (www.oraldentalcare.com)

See **O'MALLEY** on page 4

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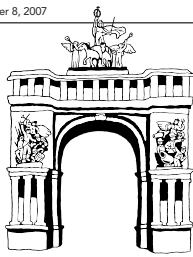
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THE STOOOP

PARK SLOPE PROSPECT HEIGHTS, SUNSET PARK
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She longs to shop on 7th

I have decided that this year I am going to do as much of my holiday shopping right here in Park Slope as I can.

I made this decision for virtuous reasons. The Park Slope Civic Council says that when you buy from local merchants, more of every dollar stays in the community than if you use that same dollar at the neighborhood Starbucks or Barnes & Noble.

Plus, if more people would buy locally and shop online less, there will be more choices and lower prices in the smaller stores.

But I discovered an even better reason to shop locally. It's funny! Funny as in hilarious, amusing, and good for a whole bunch of laughs.

I set out with a long list of people to shop for. My first stop, Cog and Pearl on Fifth Avenue, seemed like a good place to get something for my boyfriend. I was immediately drawn to a bunch of old sepia-toned portraits on the back wall. He likes old photos.

Then I took a closer look. Something was odd about these. There was a portrait of a husband and wife, him seated with her standing primly next to him, one hand on his shoulder. Their sober faces stood out in stark contrast to the virulent green snake, which was wrapped lovingly around her neck.

Below her hang the christening portrait of a small baby looking none too happy (portraits took a long time back in those days). The bottom edge of her long white dress was on fire, the orange flames slowly creeping up. Next to that one was a portrait of three sisters. Nice-looking gals in tight-bodied Victorian dress — only one of them had no head!

Still shaking my head, I stopped by NYC Pets, which is right next door. I needed to pick up some food for the dog ... but not a Christmas gift, I swear. Right next to the cans of gourmet dog food, I encountered a Hillary Clinton chew toy for dogs.

"It takes a village to do my hair," the little rubber senator says.

Over at the other end of the Slope, I decided to go into Meshmar for a change of pace. This is a nice consignment shop with some pretty vintage jewelry and funky knick-knacks, which would be perfect for my sister-in-law. Then I looked up.

"Is that real?" I gasped, staring at the mounted deer head on the wall covered with Looney Tune characters. "I mean, is there really a deer's head in there?"

"Oh, yes," said the shopkeeper. I asked about the price, just out of curiosity. Let's just say it stops short of four digits. Barely.

I went across the street to see about getting my mother a pair of gloves at Bird. They have some really nice ones. On the way out, I glanced at the underwear. For me (I mean I should get a little something after all this footwork). These were rather unique. Picture a pair of old-fashioned poofy bloomers — only bikini style, and in plaid.

Back in the North Slope, I went to Loom to buy scented candles for a friend. Over in the back corner, there are also some re-

See **SHOP** on page 4



Wendy Ponte



Allen Brafman, owner of Little Things on Seventh Avenue, will participate in the "Snowflake Celebration" on Thursday, Dec. 13.

Shop till they drop

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

Park Slope will become a late night, winter wonderland next Thursday — complete with fake snow, free booze, and Christmas carolers — all to lure holiday shoppers into neighborhood stores.

The so-called "Snowflake Celebration" is the second phase of the "Buy in Brooklyn" Campaign (the first phase was that wacky, yellow umbrella-sharing program that launched in November and appears to be doing well so far).

On Thursday night, until about 10 p.m., more than 110 Park Slope businesses will offer holiday sales, free wine and cheese, or even fake snow!

"There is a recognition now that neighborhood character is very dependent on the small businesses," said Catherine Bohne, the owner of Community Bookstore on Seventh Avenue. Bohne is behind the "Buy in Brooklyn" Campaign, which is spearheading the event with the Park Slope Civic Council and the Park Slope Chamber of Commerce.

"Everywhere in the city and country, small businesses with character are being pushed out by big corporate monoliths," added Bohne, who knows fully

well the value of community, given that her store was on the verge of going out of business until a handful of customers rallied her back from the brink.

To convince customers of the charm of shopping local, Bohne will affix two snow machines to her awning, sending white flakes fluttering down in front of her store.

Further down Seventh Avenue, between 10th and 11th streets, 4PLAYBK owner Laura Kleinman will lure customers at her hip clothing store with free wine and cheese and a live DJ.

Closer to Flatbush Avenue, the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music will use its Seventh Avenue stoop as a stage, featuring

R&B choir renditions of Christmas carols.

"The whole point of the festival is to bring the community together, and we want to be a part of that," said Lucy Walters, spokeswoman for the Conservatory.

Of course, the point is also to remind neighbors that without their charming local shops, Park Slope wouldn't be much of a neighborhood.

"A lot of businesses are leaving the neighborhood by going online," said Allen Brafman, Chamber of Commerce president and owner of Little Things Toy Store, which will offer discounts all night long.

"There are many stores in Park Slope that have a full range of products equal to what's online," said Brafman. "And without these stores, Park Slope will become some kind of suburban bedroom community."

"I was in the store for 15 minutes the other day, and three longtime customers came in," recalled Brafman. "One of them asked about an item in the store she remembered from when she was 9 years old. That kind of relationship can only exist in a community."

For a list of all participating stores, visit buyinbrooklyn.com.

Melinda Morris, owner of Lion in the Sun and seen here with one of the neighborhood's free "Buy in Brooklyn" umbrellas, will also participate in the Dec. 13 shopping event.

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Hey, mom: Here's a new way to stay sane

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

A Fort Greene mother, who nearly ended up in the psych ward following the birth of her first child, rebounded to launch a new Web site called [sanenoms.com](http://www.sanenoms.com) to help the newly delivered adjust to the very idea of being a "mom."

In so doing, Vedder is jumping swollen ankles first into what has become an online mommy industrial complex. It's a complex that contains dozens of Web sites, targeting everyone from working moms (thebusymom.com) to stay-at-home moms (clubmom.com) to breast-feeding moms (breastfeeding.com) to Park Slope moms (parkslopemoms.com).

Vedder's site focuses on the notion of a mother's identity. "Women are very happy to admit foibles and weaknesses, but I don't see a lot online about how they don't really know who they are anymore," said Vedder. Vedder, now a mother of two and life coach whose client base is largely stay-at-home moms, "I hear the same things over and over again: 'I have no time for myself.' 'I can't think straight.' 'I don't even know what I want anymore because my kids need me 24/7.'" added

Vedder. "It was time to get the conversation moving a bit."

So far, most of the comments on the site have come from a woman calling herself "comfortablecrazy," who wrote that having kids "shifted all [her] priorities in [her] marriage."

Not that that's bad, but when you have a baby on your one-year anniversary, it's hard," she said. "It played on all my insecurities. ... It caused me to look at myself in a different way and I wasn't sure if I liked what I saw."

The mother of a 17-month-old and a 5-and-a-half-year-old, Vedder said that she experienced similar emotions and nearly lost her sanity after the birth of her first child.

"It was this feeling that I don't know how to do this," said Vedder. "Being a mother wasn't my dream since I was 3 years old, it just happened."

And it engendered an identity crisis, an experience she's since seen replicated with a number of her friends and clients. For some, it's a sense of guilt that they're not spending enough time with their children. For others, it's the guilt that they're spending too much time with their kids and too little on their own pursuits.

Dan McAdams, a psycholo-



Fort Greene writer Bethany Vedder, founder of www.sanenoms.com, at her desk with son Flynn.

gy professor at Northwestern University, said most women's self-images are altered by having a child, but he wasn't so sure about the prevalence of "identity crises."

"For some people, maybe it is," said McAdams. "But there isn't any research that shows

that it's a predictable thing." McAdams' friends and colleagues shared by Susan Fox, who founded Park Slope Parents Web site in 2002.

"[Web sites] about parenting on the Internet are so plentiful that it may be hard to gain lots of members in the space," said

Fox. "[But] the bottom line to me is this: anything that supports parenthood and its trials and tribulations is admirable."

Vedder will officially launch her site on Dec. 15 with a three-kilometer run in Fort Greene Park (the run is to underscore the importance of ac-

tivities that allow for "alone time.")

Run the Moms and Kiddie Race, Fort Greene Park (bounded by DeKalb Avenue, Myrtle Avenues Washington Park and St. Edwards Street), 9 a.m. Visit www.sanenoms.com for information.

CB6 OKs a reduced Hicks hi-rise

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

A developer who scaled back his three-site project on public and private land in the Columbia Street Waterfront District won overwhelming support from Community Board 6's land-use committee last Thursday.

In October, L&M Equity was thwarted

at a CB6 meeting for its plan for 172 housing units, most of them contained in an eight-story building on Hicks Street between Congress and Warren streets.

But the committee was warmer last Thursday, when architect David Gross unveiled the new designs in a presentation he titled "We're Trying to Listen."

L&M pared the Hicks Street building to six stories, installed a retro brick

façade and eliminated about 50 units overall, but retained all 41 below-market rentals to get city subsidies.

The land-use committee saluted the revisions, but was concerned about zoning changes beyond the developer's property.

L&M owns two sites between Columbia, Congress, Hicks and Warren streets that need to be rezoned to residential, but the city is proposing to rezone the entire block.

The land-use committee wants to control future development in the mixed manufacturing and residential area, so it voted to only upzone L&M's lots.

The next step is a vote by the full CB6 board on Dec. 12. CB6 full board meeting, Dec. 12 at 6:30 pm in Borough Hall (209 Joralemon St., between Court and Adams streets). For information, call (718) 643-3027.

Driver's defense? 'Only 3 drinks'

By Harry Cheadle
The Brooklyn Paper

88th Precinct

A drunk driver who crashed near the corner of Flatbush Avenue and Hanson Place on Dec. 1 didn't help his cause by offering cops this excuse: "I only had three drinks!"

The accident was reported to cops around 6 p.m., and an officer arrived on the scene shortly afterwards. There was only one car, the man's 1998 Ford Wind, and the driver, who was 59-year-old, had bloodshot eyes, smelled of alcohol, and was "swaying and unsteady on his feet."

"I only had three drinks!" the man claimed. "One beer and two Scotchies!"

The cop put the man under arrest after confirming with a witness that the man had been behind the wheel. The witness added that the man had had trouble getting out of his car.

Look out below

Everyone knows that New York's Finest face danger on the job — but danger from falling toilets?

That was the occupational hazard two cops confronted on Nov. 27, when a perp with a strong dislike for the men in blue tossed a number of heavy

objects, including a dresser and a toilet, from the roof of a housing complex on Cumberland Walk near Myrtle Avenue.

The officers had just left the building at around 11 a.m. after arresting a juvenile offender, when objects started falling from the sky.

They jumped out of the way and tried to avoid being hit by the dresser and the toilet — the falling piano, a cartoon staple, didn't make an appearance — and didn't suffer any injuries.

But the squad car wasn't so lucky. After the barrage ceased, the cops saw that the windshield had been cracked, the rooflights were broken, and the roof itself was damaged.

Mean girls

Three 15-year-olds girls assaulted a woman walking home and took everything — even the shoes off her feet — on Nov. 26.

The 21-year-old victim was walking down Lafayette Avenue and had just reached the corner of Washington Avenue at 8:30 pm when the three approached her. The first one grabbed her from behind and struck her on the face, while the other two yelled incoherent threats at her and stripped her of her property, which meant not just her \$90 designer purse, but her sunglasses, Nokia cell phone, high heel shoes, and her house keys.

Burglary foiled

A not-so-cute burglar picked the wrong time to break into a Gates Avenue apartment building's basement on Nov. 28, and he was soon put into cuffs by the cops.

The 43-year-old crook began his attempt at around 4 p.m. when he walked casually to the side door of the apartment building, near St. James Place, and used tools to open the door.



Christmas mystery!

Someone has started hanging these hand-crafted holiday ornaments on the official DUM-B0 Christmas tree. Any ideas?

He must have been making too much noise, however, because the alert owner of the building noticed the racket and called the police.

The cops arrived and found the perp still trying to take his prize — a \$150 worth of copper piping — out of the door.

iPunched

A man beat up a 17-year-old for his iPod on Nov. 29.

The teen was walking on Park Avenue near North Portland Avenue when a man abruptly grabbed him from behind and

demanded, "Give me your iPod."

Without waiting for an answer, the perp took the ubiquitous device from the kid's pocket and punched him several times in the face, apparently for the sheer joy of it.

In exchange for his iPod nano, the victim got only a bruised and swollen jaw.

Car crimes

The cold weather must be discouraging car thieves, as police reported only one car stolen and only one broken into in the Fort Greene area last week — a 2005 Honda Accord owned by a 45-year-old man who parked it on Cumberland Avenue near DeKalb Avenue at 1:30 pm on Nov. 25.

The car was equipped with a LoJack security system designed to inform the owner when his car was being moved, and it actually went off at 10 am the next morning.

But the owner dismissed the call, thinking that it was just a "low battery" warning. He realized his mistake at 7 pm when he returned to his parking spot to discover that his car had been jacked.

The other incident occurred in the parking garage of the shopping complex at Atlantic Avenue and Fort Greene Place. A 33-year-old man parked his 2006 Dodge Caravan at around 1:20 pm and went shopping; when he returned an hour later, he found out that someone had been burglar-hunting in his car — his Macintosh Powerbook was missing.

On the run

A teenager walking home tried to run away from him when approached by a suspicious group on Nov. 26, but the pack soon caught up with him and beat him and stole his iPod.

The 17-year-old was on Clinton Avenue near DeKalb Avenue at around 6:30 pm when four men approached him. One of them asked, "Can I see your iPod?" But the kid, knowing where that line

of questioning was going, took off running.

Before he got to Willoughby Avenue, however, the four caught up with him and dragged him to the ground, injuring his face, and snatched the popular digital music device from his coat pocket before fleeing down Clinton Avenue.

76th Precinct

Licentious

A double-parked car containing five driver's licenses and a college identity card attracted the attention of a fast-fingered thief on Nov. 27, police said.

The white Mitsubishi was illegally parked on Carroll Street near Van Brunt Street, outside its owner's business, at around 10:30 a.m. The bandit noticed an unlocked door and went inside, stealing the five licenses, the ID card, a \$50 parking meter card and a YMCA card before 25-year-old owner returned, police said.

The victim told police that he had only been gone from his car a few minutes. "He didn't explain why he had five driver's licenses on him."

Gun, no keys

Two gun-brandishing hoodlums assaulted a 32-year-old man on the corner of Van Dyke and Conover Street on Nov. 25, police said.

The muggers put a silver handgun to the man's neck at around 7:25 p.m. and threatened to pull the trigger if he bolted, police said. One goon took \$10 from the man's left pocket while the other grabbed keys and a cellphone out of his right pocket. The attackers gave their mark his keys back before running away — with Anelli Cohen

84th Precinct

The 84th Precinct declined to make its information available

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December 8, 2007

Man stabbed in bar—again

By Matthew Lysiak
and Michael Giardina
The Brooklyn Paper

68th Precinct

Yet another bar fight broke out in Bay Ridge last week—in this case, a 23-year-old man was stabbed three times at a Fourth Avenue watering hole on Nov. 30.

This time trouble began while the victim was standing in front of the popular bar, which is located near 90th Street. Shortly after 3 a.m., he got into an argument with a stranger that quickly turned violent, according to cops.

Police say that's when the thug pulled out a box cutter and stabbed the victim once in the chest, back, and left shoulder before fleeing on foot.

The victim was treated for minor injuries at the scene.

Bars and nightclubs are under increased scrutiny from local officials since there has been an increase in drunken violence over the past 16 months—including at least nine stabbings.

Bars are on notice that they could lose their liquor license, police told Community Board 10 this month.

Gang violence

A 17-year-old boy told cops he was standing on the corner of Third Avenue and 76th Street on Nov. 27, when a familiar gang attacked him.

Cops say the crime went

down at 11 p.m., when the victim was approached by the three gang members, who were wearing black and blue bandanas. The trio ordered the teen to hand over his bag, which contained an iPod. He promptly followed orders.

"Because you did nothing crazy, we are not going to hit you in the face," one of the considerate creeps said.

The boy identified the perps to cops by their street names, "Payaso," "Chou," and "Clony."

Doh! Nuts!
Talk about a Bad Samaritan! A 36-year-old woman left her pocket book behind at a Fourth Avenue Dunkin' Donuts at around 11:30 a.m. and returned minutes to later to discover that someone had grabbed it on Dec. 2.

Security cameras at the donut shop, which is near 87th Street, caught the opportunistic thief running off with the purse, which contained \$300.

Lady mugged
Chivalry really is dead.

At least it is in the case of one 29-year-old woman who was walking in front of her Bay Ridge Avenue apartment building on Nov. 26 at around 3:10 p.m. That's when a man came from behind, pushed her to the ground, and stole her purse before fleeing on foot.

The Grinch got \$150, two gold bracelets valued at \$200, and a spot on Santa's naughty list.

The victim told cops that she had intended to use the money

68/62 Blotter

to buy Christmas presents.
Lady mugged

An elderly woman was mugged on 84th Street near Third Avenue on Nov. 27.

The 78-year-old victim was on her way home after doing some shopping shortly around 9 p.m. when she was knocked to the ground from behind by a cruel hearted perp.

The thug grabbed her purse, and the \$30 inside, before running away.

62nd Precinct
Friendly swipe

A man had \$2,000 robbed by his own friend, right in front of his very eyes, after his buddy lifted the money bag from his vehicle on Nov. 30, police said.

The 56-year-old victim was parked on 86th Street, near 15th Avenue, at around 11 a.m., when his friend approached the passenger side of the vehicle, where the money was lying.

The old chums began talking, when all of a sudden the thief swiped the bag of cash from the seat and fled.

The former friend still hasn't been caught.

Safe heist
A safe containing more than \$20,000 in cash and jewelry was stolen from an Ovington Court apartment on Nov. 30,

police said.
The 28-year-old resident returned to her apartment, which is near 67th Street, at around 12:15 a.m., and discovered her front door was wide open along with a busted rear bedroom window.

The perps had used a ladder to climb through the window.

Bump and run
A pickpocket stole a woman's wallet on 86th Street on Nov. 28.

The 42-year-old victim was walking near 18th Avenue at around 4 p.m., when the unknown pickpocket bumped her, swiped the wallet, and fled.

Moments later, the woman realized her billfold, which contained \$160, along with her credit and debit cards, was gone, police said.

17th Ave mug
A woman was pushed to the ground and robbed as she was waiting for the 17th Avenue bus early on Nov. 28.

The 58-year-old was near 73rd Street, when at around 2 a.m., the thug approached her. The perp grabbed her pocketbook, which contained \$100, including her credit and debit cards, and shoved her to the ground during the scuffle, police said.

The thug fled with the purse — and left the woman on the ground.

Tag team

Two thugs shoved and robbed a man as he was walking home on Avenue P at 4 a.m. on Nov. 28.

The 39-year-old was near Dahill Road when the thugs approached. One member of the tag team placed an unknown weapon on his head, while the other shoved him to the ground, and swiped \$389 and his cell phone, police said.

The two perps fled as the victim lay faced down on the pavement.

Bodega hold-up
A gun-toting perp robbed a Bath Avenue grocery store, swiping its cash on Nov. 28.

The perp entered the bodega, which is near Bay 34th Street, at around 11:35 a.m. and demanded money.

To make matters easier, he pulled out the black pistol and took \$500 from the stunned counterwoman, police said.

The thug fled in a white four-door sedan down Bath Avenue.

Rental robbery
A rental van was stolen — along with the furniture of the man who had rented it on Dec. 1, cops said.

The victim had loaded up the 2007 white Dodge van with his prized possessions and left the vehicle parked on 63rd Street near 16th Avenue. When he came back at around 9 p.m., it was gone.

Cops are asking the public to help locate the van, with New York plate 2JC-657. If you see it, call the 62nd Precinct at (718) 236-3611.

Fatal stabbing at the Gregory

By Joe Jordan
for The Brooklyn Paper

Normally quiet Bay Ridge is reeling over a mysterious fatal stabbing at a Fourth Avenue hotel on Monday morning.

David Diaz, 26, was found dead in his room at the Best Western Gregory Hotel just before noon by a hotel employee. Within minutes NYPD units responded to the frenzied scene, roping off much of the sidewalk on 4th Avenue between E 3rd and 84th streets throughout the day.

Police say Diaz had been stabbed in the back and had been beaten about the head.

Diaz, who lived a few blocks away on Fifth Avenue and 76th Street, had checked into the hotel on Sunday with an unidentified woman.

Police said the woman is wanted for questioning, but would not confirm whether she is currently a suspect.

Family members and neighbors are also being questioned.

Cops are asking the public to help locate the van, with New York plate 2JC-657. If you see it, call the 62nd Precinct at (718) 236-3611.

The hotel staff wasn't talking this week, either. "No comment," said a manager.

Shocked neighbors say Diaz had lived with his parents. The family had previously lived above Leske Bakery at 7612 Fifth Ave. and moved two doors down to its current apartment almost two years ago.

An employee at Bay Ridge Pizzeria and Restaurant, at 7704 Fifth Ave., said Diaz would often come in for a pie. He called the dead man a very unassuming, "nice guy."

The hotel, located at 84th St. and Fourth Avenue, was built in 1926. A fire in 1986 destroyed the interior, but it was restored and reopened as a Comfort Inn.

More recently, it became part of the Best Western chain, yet retained its traditional moniker, "Gregory Hotel."

O'MALLEY...

Continued from page 3
frankiemarra.com). Marra used to work for Bruce Springsteen...
"The Winds of Change," which is the newsletter of the Brooklyn Democrats for Change, is chock full of interesting liberal thoughts, including a restaurant review of our French bistro, **Petit Ouen**, located on 267 Bay Ridge Ave. Reviewer **Patrick Daniel Gaffi** gave it four and a half stars... Last week, Duane Reade announced that it would open a Diabetes Resource Center, a free training and educational facility for individuals and their families, at 436 86th St. ... If you like Christmas lights and palm trees then **Sam Malouf's** home on the corner of Colonial Road and 81st Street is the place to be. Take the kids — and the sunglasses.
Email us at Stroop@BrooklynPaper.com.

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On this one night, over 100 local businesses, from 7th Avenue to 5th Avenue to Vanderbilt will stay open until 10 p.m. Many are offering special discounts, promotions, activities, or (sometimes boozie!) refreshments. Local restaurants are offering everything from free amuse-bouches to discounts on wine, prix fix specials and more! Carolers will wander the streets. We're even drumming up some snow (seriously!)

After 25 years of decorating our lampposts, the snowflakes will blossom (to mix metaphors) all over Park Slope! Follow the snowflakes soon appearing in the windows of participating vendors, and remember . . . there's no place like home!

Please feel free to contact Rebeccah at buyinbrooklyn@gmail.com if you have questions, or ideas to help publicize this potentially magical night!

Shop Local Factoid # 307: Shifting just \$100 of your holiday shopping to local vendors has a tremendous benefit to your local economy, which ultimately benefits the whole community (you included!). Plus it's fun and easy!



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Hey, mom: Here's a new way to stay sane

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

A Fort Greene mother, who nearly ended up in the psych ward following the birth of her first child, rebounded to launch a new Web site called [sanenoms.com](http://www.sanenoms.com) to help the newly delivered adjust to the very idea of being a "mom."

In so doing, Vedder is jumping swollen ankles first into what has become an online mommy industrial complex. It's a complex that contains dozens of Web sites, targeting everyone from working moms (bluecattomom.com) to stay-at-home moms (clubmom.com) to breast-feeding moms (breastfeeding.com) to Park Slope moms (parkslopemoms.com).

Vedder's site focuses on the notion of a mother's identity. "Women are very happy to admit foibles and weaknesses, but I don't see a lot online about how they don't really know who they are anymore," said Bethany Vedder, now a mother of two and life coach whose client base is largely stay-at-home moms.

"I hear the same things over and over again: 'I have no time for myself.' 'I can't think straight.' 'I don't even know what I want anymore because my kids need me 24/7,'" added

Vedder. "It was time to get the conversation moving a bit."

So far, most of the comments on the site have come from a woman calling herself "comfortablecrazy," who wrote that having kids "shifted all [her] priorities in [her] marriage."

"Not that that's bad, but when you have a baby on your one-year anniversary, it's hard," she said. "It played on all my insecurities... It caused me to look at myself in a different way and I wasn't sure if I liked what I saw."

The mother of a 17-month-old and a 5-and-a-half-year-old, Vedder said that she experienced similar emotions and nearly lost her sanity after the birth of her first child.

"It was this feeling that I don't know how to do this," said Vedder. "Being a mother wasn't my dream since I was 3 years old. It just happened."

And it engendered an identity crisis, an experience she's since seen replicated with a number of her friends and clients. For some, it's a sense of guilt that they're not spending time with their kids and their friends. For others, it's a sense that they're spending too much time with their kids and not too little on their own pursuits. Dan McAdams, a psycholo-



Fort Greene writer Bethany Vedder, founder of www.sanenoms.com, at her desk with son Fynn.

gy professor at Northwestern University, said most women's self-images are altered by having a child, but he wasn't so sure about the prevalence of "identity crises."

"For some people, maybe it is," said McAdams. "But there isn't any research that shows

that it's a predictable thing."

McAdams's dubiousness was shared by Susan Fox, who founded Park Slope Parents Web site in 2002.

"[Web sites] about parenting on the Internet are so plentiful that it may be hard to gain lots of members in the space," said

Fox. "[But] the bottom line to me is this: anything that supports parenthood and its trials and tribulations is admirable."

Vedder will officially launch her site on Dec. 15 with a three-kilometer run in Fort Greene Park (the run is to underscore the importance of ac-

tivities that allow for "alone time.")

Run the Moms and Kiddle Race, Fort Greene Park (bounded by Dekalb Avenue, Myrtle Avenues Washington Park and St. Edwards Street), 9 a.m. Visit www.sanenoms.com for information.

Two burglars in one night on Scholes

POLICE BLOTTER

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

90th Precinct

A burglar broke into two Scholes Street apartments on Nov. 26, removing an Apple iBook and \$20 from one and stealing thousands of dollars in electronics from another, cops said.

The first theft occurred sometime between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., when the resident was not at the apartment, which is between Humboldt Street and Bushwick Avenue.

The thief stole a digital camera, a Nintendo Wii system, and three video cameras.

The second victim — on the same block — told police that she was not home between midnight and 3 a.m., when the iBook burglary occurred.

L of a mugging
A thief snatched a woman's handbag as she was waiting for a Canarsie-bound L train at the Morgan Avenue station on Nov. 30.

The 22-year-old was on the platform at around 5 p.m. when a thief came up from behind, grabbed the bag and headed toward the Bogart Street exit of the station. But for some reason, he doubled back, pushed

the woman to the ground and said, "Don't follow me."

He got away with her cellphone, \$15, various cards, a digital camera and the fancy handbag itself.

Just said no

A man who had just left a Masepe Avenue grocery store just said no to a gun-toting thief on Nov. 30 — and the perp left without taking anything.

The brave — but possibly foolish — man said the gunman followed him out of the store, which is between Conselyea Street and Kingsland Avenue, at around 1 a.m., caught up to him, pulled out a gun and said, "Gimme all your money."

But when the won't-be victim said "No," the gunman withdrew.

Garbage rob

A Grand Street bodega was robbed of thousands of dollars in cash, cigarettes and phone cards on Nov. 29 during the 15 minutes when the owner was taking out the trash, cops said.

The victim told police that he had pulled down his gate, but not locked it, at around 11 p.m. to deal with the garbage. When he returned, he noticed two men running from the store, which is between Manhattan and Graham avenues, with bags in their hands.

The bags contained \$3,900, \$6,200 in smokes and \$1,000 in phone cards.

Found lost
A thief stole a family satellite-guided navigation system from a car on Lorimer Avenue on Nov. 30, cops said.

The 35-year-old owner of the Chevy Suburban told cops that he had parked the car at the corner of Union Avenue at just after midnight, but when he returned at around 7 a.m., he found that a hole had been drilled in the driver's-side door and the \$4,000 navigation system was gone.

One day later on the same corner, a 2004 Nissan Maxima was swiped, its owner told cops.

The 20-year-old car owner said he had parked the car on that corner at 5 p.m., but it wasn't there when he got back.

iPod Igone

A thief pointed on a woman as she was listening to her iPod on Nov. 30, grabbing the popular digital music device right

Snow time for swimming

If it's snowing, it must be a beautiful day for a swim at Coney Island, as these members of the Arctic Ice Breakers proved during the season's first snow on Sunday.



out of the woman's hands as she was walking on Lorimer Street.

The 24-year-old victim told cops that she was near the corner of Ten Eyck Street at around 10 a.m. when the thief ran up and grabbed the music player.

She was not injured in the incident.

Boerum beat

A thief punched out a 28-year-old and stole his Dell laptop on Nov. 26, cops said.

The computer user was on Boerum Street between Manhattan and Graham avenues at around 8 p.m. when the 6-foot, 180-pound assailant, estimated at 40 years old, ran up, punched him in the nose and stole his bag.

Roll 'em

A 14-year-old was mugged for his cellphone by another teenager on Nov. 28, cops said.

The teen told police that a 15-year-old approached him on the corner of Graham Avenue and Metropolitan Avenue at around 8 p.m. and told him to "roll your pockets."

The boy "didn't want any problems," so he gave the thief the phone.

Skate off

A man's skateboard was stolen from his Bushwick Avenue apartment on Nov. 28, cops said.

The 33-year-old victim told police that he was not in the apartment at around 10:15 a.m. when the thief broke in and took the set of wheels.

Speaks Latin?

An apparent gang member, just out of jail and desperate to see his daughter, held up a Mauer Street man claiming he had a gun on Dec. 4.

The victim told cops that he was standing in front of his building, which is between Union Avenue and Lorimer Street at just after midnight when the thief came up and said, "I just got out of prison" and claimed to be a member of the Latin Kings gang.

He asked for money so he could go to see his daughter, but when the man refused, the supposed gang member got angry, saying, "If you don't give

me money, I'm going to pull out my gun and shoot you."

That was apparently enough to get the man to surrender his cash — all of \$11.

The gang-banger pulled out the man's ID card from the wallet and said, "Now I know

where you live — so are you going to call the cops?"

The victim said, "No," but did just that.

Cops are looking for a 5-foot-8, 160-pound white Hispanic man with brown eyes and curly black hair.

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SHOP

Continued from page 3
ally cute baby gifts. I do have one friend with a young baby right now. Still, I was not even tempted to buy the Chew Baby Food Organizer that is 15 inches high — even though it is "easy to assemble." Jeze, by the time she puts it together, the baby food phase will be over already. Of course, you could use it to hold eggs after that...

That was so much fun, I can't wait to go shopping again. Meanwhile, there's relief for the usual shopping trauma I go through each year. On Thursday, Dec. 13, is the Snowflake Celebration where local stores are going to stay open until 10 pm to promote the Buy in Brooklyn Campaign.

I'm so there. Wendy Ponder is a writer who lives in Park Slope.

KITCHEN SINK
Our editor caught the **Life in a Blender** show at **Barbes** on Ninth Street last Saturday and pronounced it the "best concert of the year." Our theory is that he was satisfied because lead singer **Don Rouf** finally agreed to play "What Happened to Smith," the band's certification anthem, after our boss screamed it out four times... South Slopes are justifiably excited by the new **Union Market** about to open on Seventh Avenue between 12th and 13th streets, but what's with that large plasma-screen TV in the window? This is a supermarket, not the "Today" show studio...

Looks like **Brooklyn Industries** is going to double its space by taking over the optical shop, which is leaving the corner of Seventh Avenue and Ninth Street and moving a few doors away... Heard a great tip from one of our spies: **Lincoln Place** between Seventh and Eighth Avenues is a great place to stroll on garbage day. One guy told us that he got an HP printer that worked great. And this week, we spotted a great table and some classic books.

Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com

Correction
Wrong signage
In a front page article, "City bans sign language" (Nov. 24), The Brooklyn Paper misidentified the pharmacist who was holding a picture of a ticket he received from the city. It was Ansonia Chemist co-owner Dennis DiStimone. The Paper regrets the error.

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Please feel free to contact Rebecca at buyinbrooklyn@gmail.com if you have questions, or ideas to help publicize this potentially magical night!

Shop Local Factoid # 307: Shifting just \$100 of your holiday shopping to local vendors has a tremendous benefit to your local economy, which ultimately benefits the whole community (you included!). Plus it's fun and easy!



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City can't curb Yards security

By Mike McLaughlin

The Brooklyn Paper

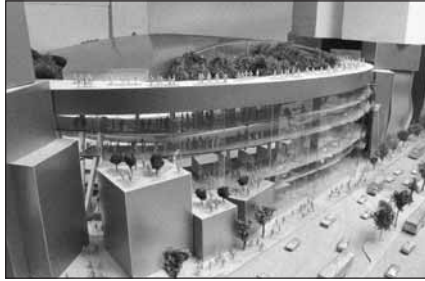
Elected officials and community groups again attacked the city, state and developer Forest City Ratner for their persistent refusal to discuss how they plan to secure the proposed Atlantic Yards basketball arena when it is slated to open in 2010.

A coalition of elected officials joined the Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods on the steps of City Hall last Thursday to demand an independent security study of Atlantic Yards. The pole transcribed a recent New York Times story that finally reported what many opponents of the project have long known: that the proposed glass-walled arena is only 20 feet from the street along Flatbush and Atlantic avenues.

The group believes that the arena's proximity to the street will require busy roadways to be closed on game nights — a nightmare traffic scenario.

This concern came up earlier this year, when Newark police officials surprised many by announcing they would close off streets around that city's new glass-walled arena, which is 25 feet from the street.

"They need to answer why they're doing this in Newark, but not here," said Daniel Goldstein, the spokesman for Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn, one of the groups that joined state Sen. Velmanette Montgomery (D-Prospect Heights), Assemblywoman Joan Millman (D-Cobble Hill), Assemblyman Jim Brennan (D-Park Slope),



An early rendering of the Frank Gehry-designed basketball arena shows just how close the glass-walled building will be to Flatbush and Atlantic avenues.

Councilwoman Letitia James (D-Prospect Heights), Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights) and Councilman Bill DeBlasio (D-Cobble Hill) last Thursday.

But the Empire State Development Corporation, Bruce Ratner's government partner in the project, says the impact of security measures will be minimal.

"We are confident we can work with the NYPD and the state's Office of Homeland Security to ensure security ... without having to close any streets," said ESDC spokesman A.J. Carter.

The NYPD did not respond to requests for more details about why it is confident that it will not have to adopt Newark's strategy. The ESDC also would not get specific about security (though the agency did provide an affidavit explaining its rationale for silence, see side story).

FOIL-ed! State says it can't talk security

The Brooklyn Paper

In October, The Brooklyn Paper filed a Freedom of Information Law request for all documents related to security planning at Atlantic Yards by the Empire State Development Corporation.

Last week, we finally got our long-sought documents. So what did they amount to?

A 10-page affidavit from a Forest City Ratner security consultant that explained why all the plans must be kept classified.

"It is critical to the security of the arena block, and to the safety of the arena's patrons and neighbors, that this information be maintained in strictest confidence and not be disclosed to anyone other than the owner, the design professionals involved in development of the Project, and appropriate law enforcement agencies," consultant Jeff Venter argued.

Consider that: we had asked for documents that could shed some light on the security situation at Atlantic Yards and were sent, instead, a document explaining why

we had to remain in the dark. And that isn't good public policy, said John Goering, a public affairs professor at Baruch College.

"The idea that some bureaucracy at ESDC decided to snub the press doesn't surprise me," he said. "But I see no reason why there can't be a public discussion on it."

In addition to not fulfilling The Paper's information request, ESDC demanded \$9 for copying costs. We are working on the agency's request.

—Mike McLaughlin

DUFFIELD...

Continued from page 1

Brooklyn Plan, and is an important incentive to attract private investment."

In a last-ditch effort to appease preservationists, the city co-named Duffield Street "Abolitionist Place" in September and promised \$2 million to commemorate Abolitionist activity on the street.

Critics, including Councilwoman Letitia James (D-Fort Greene), said the co-naming was a nice gesture, but that the houses should still be preserved.

Following last week's settlement, Chatel thanked the mayor "for listening to our plea."

Lawyer Jennifer Levy, who represented Chatel, speculated that the city decided to settle because it "was the fastest way to continue development, and they realized they could redraw the [park] plans pretty easily."

But the future of the other six homes, which might be condemned during a different phase of the Downtown Brooklyn Plan, remains up in the air.

The city, meanwhile, declared itself happy with the results.

"The city is pleased that this litigation was resolved in a manner favorable to all the parties involved, and is now looking forward to proceeding with its plan for commercial and residential growth in Downtown Brooklyn, together with the mayor's initiative to commemorate the area's abolitionist history," said Law Department spokeswoman Kate Ahlers.

For his part, Chan declared this week that "Willoughby Square will move forward and will, in time, become one of the great public spaces in one of the fastest growing urban centers in America."

With Joy Chatel's house anchoring the southwest corner, that is.

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The Brooklyn Paper PARENT

KIDS • SCHOOL • STYLE • TEENS • CAMPS • MUSIC

Celebrations change, holidays stay the same

Smartmorn ran into Painter Mom at Starbucks on Seventh Avenue. While waiting for their lattes, they struck up a conversation.

"I'm not ready for this," Painter Mom said, and for some reason Smartmorn knew exactly what she meant — the holidays.

Painter Mom told Smartmorn that back when her kids were little and she wasn't working, she made a big, big deal of Christmas. The Martha Stewart tree, the twinkling lights. The cakes and pies on a table set with festive fabrics and candles. A real winter wonderland in their Park Slope brownstone.

"Now I'm stuck," Painter Mom said. "The kids expect it." Painter Mom is busy now. She spends her days in her studio preparing for exhibitions, and her kids are now busy teenagers. Smartmorn wondered, is it possible to modify some of their expectations about Christmas?

Then again, that could be tough. It would probably make them sad to go without. It might make them feel like the world is a cold, dark place without the light of their mother's Christmas.

The conversation with Painter Mom made Smartmorn think

SMART mom
By Louise Crawford

about Hepcat's mother, Arty Grandma, who has always created a picture perfect Christmas on the farm in Northern California, just like her mother did before her, complete with handmade ornaments, Advent calendars, Mexican creches, mulled cider on the stove and almond cake.

It's a labor-intensive affair.

Arty Grandma is up all night on Christmas Eve putting the final touches on her adult children's stockings. She thought that if she didn't do it, her children would be disappointed because it's so wonderful. But disappointment happens.

In recent years, Smartmorn could tell that Hepcat's mom was exhausted at Christmas time and that she had all kinds of other interesting and creative projects going on.

Christmas fantasy was starting to get in the way of her real life.

Two years ago, Smartmorn and Hepcat decided to celebrate the holidays in Brooklyn instead of going out to California. It was the first Christmas that Hepcat didn't spend at home. Ever.

He thought it would break his mother's heart. He thought he might fall apart. Neither happened. To everyone's surprise, Arty Grandma and her daughter celebrated Christmas in San Francisco.

"We were like Jews," she told Smartmorn. "We went to the movies and had Chinese food. It was fun."

Smartmorn felt a surge of love and respect for Arty Grandma, who had enjoyed the break with tradition by coming up with a creative alternative.

Surprising things happen when you break with tradition. It can be scary. It can be sad. It can feel lonely to go without one's treasured rituals. But it can also be liberating and fun.

In Brooklyn, Smartmorn and her interfaith family struggled to figure out how to celebrate the holidays in a meaningful way.

They spent Christmas Eve with Groovy Grandma and Mira Cat. Hepcat made a tasty roast leg of lamb.

They had a lox and bagel

brunch with her Jewish relatives on Christmas day and then went out to see "Godzilla" at the Pavilion. They threw a party for the friends they never get to see during the year and had it catered by Human Delight.

They spent New Year's Eve at the Liberty Heights Tap Room listening to Teen Spirit's band, Cool and Unusual Punishment.

How was it? It was complicated. Hepcat was a bit blue. Smartmorn felt a little guilty and very tired. Teen Spirit and the Oh So Feisty One seemed to enjoy being home. They talked about California a lot and what they were missing, but they also enjoyed this new flavor of Christmas.

Standing in Starbucks surrounded by shelves of Christmas merchandise, Smartmorn wondered what she could do to reduce her holiday dread this year.

The family could do one holiday rather than two (Christmas or Hanukkah; pick one). They could skip the presents altogether (that'll go over like a lead lake, OSFO has already posted her wish list on her bedroom door).

They could skip the tree (sounds good) and skip the menorah (but the candles look so pretty...).

For a moment, Smartmorn felt just as overwhelmed as Painter Mom. But then she had an idea: she should have a long talk with Hepcat, Teen Spirit and OSFO about realistic expectations and figure out what to do. Together.

Now that would be Kodak moment.

FAMILY CALENDAR

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal Jay



Kids can have fun in the bouncy castle at the Jewish Children's Museum on Dec. 9.

SATURDAY, DEC. 8
11 am-3 pm: Santa at the Salt Marsh Nature Center (3302 Avenue U at East 33rd Street in Sheepshead Bay). Free. Call (718) 421-5021 for info.
11 am and 2 pm: Kid's art seminar. Brooklyn Museum (200 Eastern Pkwy., at Washington Avenue in Prospect Heights). \$8, free for members and kids 12 and younger. Call (718) 638-6000 for info.
11:30 am and 1 pm: Kid's theater. "There Was An Old Woman." Heights Players 268 Wilcox Pl., at Joralemon Street in Brooklyn Heights. \$5. Call (718) 855-9699 for info.
Noon and 2 pm: Kid's opera. "Miss Vaux." Rensselaire Fulton Ferry Landing and Old Fulton Street in DuRoi. Call (718) 624-2083 for info.
12:30 pm and 2:30 pm: Puppet show. "The Prince and the Magic Flute." Puppetsworks (338 South Ave., at Fourth Street in Park Slope). \$8 adults, \$7 kids. Reservations suggested. Call (718) 965-3391 for info.
1 pm: Santa at Albee Square (Fulton Mall at Gold Street in Downtown Brooklyn). Free. Call (718) 403-1650 for info.
2 pm and 8 pm: Kid's play. "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Impact Theater 190 Underhill Ave., at Sterling Place in Prospect Heights. \$15, \$10 kids, free for kids 12 and younger. Call (845) 797-1320 for info.
SUNDAY, DEC. 9
10 am and 6 pm: Hanukkah events, including donut decorating, jewelry making, computer interaction and live game shows. Jewish Children's Museum (792 Eastern Pkwy., at Kropfen Avenue in Crown Heights). \$10, free for kids

2 and younger: Call (718) 467-1300 for info.
11 am-3 pm: Kid's book fair. International School of Brooklyn (82 Park Pl., at Fifth Avenue in Park Slope). Free. Call (718) 369-3023 for info.
1 pm: Scrapbook-making workshop. Salt Marsh Nature Center (3302 Avenue U at East 33rd St. in Sheepshead Bay). Free. Call 311 for info.
1:30 pm: Droidel tournament. Jewish Children's Museum (792 Eastern Pkwy., at Kropfen Avenue in Crown Heights). \$10, free for kids 2 and younger. Call (718) 467-1300 for info.
2-4 pm: Olive oil workshop. Brooklyn Botanic Garden (1000 Washington Ave., at Montgomery

Sunday, Dec. 9
12:30 pm and 2:30 pm: Puppet show. "The Prince and the Magic Flute." See Saturday, Dec. 8.
1 pm: Origami making. Salt Marsh Nature Center (3302 Avenue U at East 33rd Street in Sheepshead Bay). Free. Call (718) 421-5021 for info.
1 pm: Santa at Albee Square. See Saturday, Dec. 8.
2 pm and 8 pm: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." See Saturday, Dec. 8.
3-5 pm: Improv for kids. Brooklyn Arts Exchange (421 Fifth Ave., at Eighth Street in Park Slope). \$20 per pair, \$15 individual ticket. Call (718) 832-0018 for info.
SUNDAY, DEC. 16
3 pm: Kid's play. "Big Animal. An American Tale and Holiday Sing-Along." Brooklyn Music School Playhouse (126 St. Felix St., at Lafayette Avenue in Fort Greene). \$5. Call (718) 724-5077 for info.
3-4:30 pm: Kid's holiday party. powerhouse Avenue 87 Main St. at Water Street in DUMBO). Free. (866) 99-ARENA.
9 pm: Christmas cabaret. Kingsboro Church (415 Seventh St., at Sixth Avenue in Park Slope). \$7, \$5 kids. (718) 369-3534.
4 pm: Kid's play. "Cinderella Story." Neighborhood Work Play Kids Theater (138 South Oxford St., at Hanson Place in Fort Greene). Donations requested. Reservations necessary. Call (718) 503-4763 for info.
12:30 pm and 2:30 pm: Puppet show. "The Prince and the Magic Flute." See Saturday, Dec. 8.
2 pm: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." See Sat., Dec. 8.
THURSDAY, DEC. 13
8 pm: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." See Saturday, Dec. 8.
SATURDAY, DEC. 15
11:30 am and 1 pm: Kid's theater. "There Was An Old Woman." See Saturday, Dec. 8.
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Donut shopper socks counterman

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

A customer at a donut shop near the corner of Fifth Avenue and Ninth Street punched an employee after being told he had to wait in line on Nov. 25.

The 18-year-old counterman told police that a 19-year-old man entered at around midnight, approached the register and said, "Make me a flatbread sandwich." When the counterman told him to get in line, he balked, started an argument, brandished the glass tip jar and screamed, "I'll kick your a—!"

He then hurled the tip jar at the employee, injuring him in the right elbow, cops said. The wounded man said he knew the impatient sandwich lover — indeed, he'd applied for a job at the donut store a while ago. Cops are looking for him.

Cash back?

A cashier at a Fifth Avenue supermarket really enjoyed her job, as it allowed her to skim \$5 off of a handful of purchases — until, of course, a customer noticed and she was arrested on Nov. 26.

Cops say the 17-year-old employee of the supermarket, which is between Park and Sterling places, had been stealing money off the debit cards of at least five customers dating back to Oct. 30 before one noticed and complained.

Cops arrived and collared the

DeGraw Street resident, who told police, implausibly, "I requested cash back" from the customers.

She was charged with grand larceny, despite the low dollar amount of the crime.

Quick thief

A fast-moving purse-snatcher netted \$600 when he stole a woman's handbag at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Ninth Street on Nov. 29.

The 50-year-old victim told cops that she was on the corner at around 5 pm when the thief struck so quickly that she did not get a good look at him.

In addition to the cash, she lost various credit and debit cards.

Two days later on the same corner, another thief nabbed a woman's handbag, but the 10 am crime didn't earn the mugger anything except his victim's bi-polar medication, cops said.

Feed the kid

A mugger, using a cellphone to simulate a gun, ordered a woman to hand over all her cash, saying he had to "feed my kids" on Nov. 30.

But the kids won't get such a lavish meal, as dad got only \$2. The victim, a 22-year-old Seventh Street resident, told cops that she had just left the Fourth Avenue subway station at around 6:30 pm when the mugger struck.

He stuck what she thought was a gun into her back, and said, "Give me your money. I

have to feed my kids."

She turned over \$2 — all she had — and the perp, whom cops described as a 5-foot-7 white Hispanic man, fled on Seventh Street towards Third Avenue, cops said.

It is unclear how cops know the threatening object was a cellphone and not a gun.

Lord of rings

A thief broke into an apartment on tony Prospect Park West and made off with two gold-and-sapphire rings on Nov. 30, cops said.

The tenant of the apartment, which is between Fifth and Sixth streets, told cops that he came home at just after midnight on Dec. 1 to find that his back window was ajar and the rings, valued at \$100 each, were gone.

78th PRECINCT

Hot rocks

A burglar made a big score inside a Ninth Street apartment on Nov. 26 — stealing more than \$45,000 in jewelry.

The 37-year-old resident of the apartment, which is between Seventh and Eighth avenues, told cops that he returned home at around 2:30 pm to find his front door unlocked and a rear window open.

He soon discovered something much worse: a thief had pilfered nearly a dozen pieces of fancy jewelry, including a \$20,000 necklace, a \$15,000 bracelet, necklace and earring set and a \$1,200 ring.

To add insult to larceny, the

thief grabbed a \$5,000 computer, too — making his entire haul worth \$45,050, cops said.

Wheely bad

At least one car was stolen — and another broken into — in Park Slope last week. Here's a roundup:

• The 1992 Saturn was stolen on Nov. 30 from a spot on Fifth Avenue near the corner of Sackett Street at just before midnight. The owner told cops that he had been having dinner in a nearby bar.

• The break-in occurred on Nov. 26 in the parking lot of a popular hardware chain along the banks of the Gowanus Canal. The car's owner — a

Philadelphia resident — told cops that the Brooklyn bandit exhibited no brotherly love when he broke into the 2007 Chevy Silverado and took a computer, two iPods, a satellite-guided map and a wallet containing \$30.

Starry eyed

A native of California, who was in Park Slope shooting a movie, found out on Nov. 24 that when you're in the big city, you just can't leave your messenger bag sitting around.

The 39-year-old Venice, California, resident told police that she had put down the bag on 12th Street, between Seventh and Eighth avenues, at around 10 am. But when she looked for it — and the fancy Apple computer it contained — a few hours later, it was gone.

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Crime in the Park

As a general rule, the 78th Precinct does not make available reports of crime in Prospect Park. But crime does, indeed, occur inside the borough's most-popular greenward. This week, we scored some precious data: this year's crime numbers for the park. All stats are Jan. 1–Nov. 26, 2007. Source: NYPD

CATEGORY	2007	2006	% chg
MURDER	0	1	-100
RAPE	3	0	N/A
ROBBERY	11	19	-42.1
ASSAULT	6	5	+20
BURGLARY	3	0	N/A
GRAND LARCENY	14	5	+64.3
CAR THEFT (DUHI)	0	0	0

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Man hits the road to save Admirals Row



Scott Witter hung a sign on his battered BMW and drove around town urging Brooklynites to stand up against the proposed demolition of the Admirals Row at the Navy Yard.

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

Scott Witter, arguably the most ardent defender of the 10 run-down mansions in the Brooklyn Navy Yard known as "Admirals Row," drove his beat-up brown Beamer from the Brooklyn Museum to City Hall last week to promote Tuesday's widely unheralded public hearing about the fate of the residences.

"Mayor Moo Moo, you moroon!" read the blue-lettered, white sign affixed to the top of Witter's ancient BMW, "Landmark Admirals Row!" (The sign also included helpful information about the location and time of the meeting.)

In pursuit of preservation, Witter drove his creaky car to the limit, roaming through Park Slope, and around and around Grand Army Plaza, to Borough Hall, and even risking the trip to Manhattan to personally hand out Admirals Row leaflets.

Witter has made it his mission to draw public attention to the fate of the 150-year-old buildings, whose broken upper windows peek out at Flushing Avenue from above the Navy Yard's red brick wall.

He wants as many supporters of the Row as possible to turn out for next Tuesday's meeting, the public's only opportunity to voice its opinion about the fate of the Row before the federal government formally hands the property over to the city.

The Navy Yard Development Corporation, the quasi-governmental agency that administers the former shipyard on behalf of the city, claims the buildings, which used to house the families of Navy officers, are too run down to be saved and plans to tear down the mansions to build a super-market that is highly sought after by residents of the area.

At a town hall meeting in DUMBO on Wednesday night, Navy Yard CEO Andrew Kimball called preservationists' efforts "a misdirection of energy at best."

"The vast majority of the community wants a supermarket," said Kimball. "We're not interested in the site if we have to reuse the homes."

After the meeting, Kimball's staff handed out talking points to those interested in defending the Navy Yard plan at the upcoming meeting.

"You can only preserve that which is preservable," read the corporation's talking points. But preservationists, including Witter, say that the city can and should retain the houses as historical artifacts. "Buildings have to be pretty far gone to be beyond saving," Roger Lang, of the New York Landmarks Conservancy, recently told The Brooklyn Paper. "But that's not an economic calculation, that's an emotional and physical one."

Our man walks the walk Downtown

GUEST VIEW



Adam F. Hutton

I took a walk through Downtown last month. This was no normal stroll, but a walking tour of the rapidly changing neighborhood called "Anyplace, Brooklyn."

Created by Prospect-Leftists Gardens documentation Samara Smith, the tour is part art project, part history lesson and part contemporary social criticism. Smith spent two years walking the streets Downtown, researching the project, recording inter-

views with locals and learning about eminent domain and urban renewal that is changing the place from a low-rise, low-rent area into a Gophtan-style skyscraper park.

"I didn't know what the project would ultimately turn out to be," Smith said. "I decided it should be an audio walking tour because I wanted people to be able to walk through Downtown in different people's shoes, to see the space through the eyes of



A new audio tour of Downtown Brooklyn takes participants through the Fulton Mall, Duffield Street and the door Metrotech complex, seen (top right) with few pedestrians and (bottom) with underutilized ground-floor retail.



the people who live, work and shop there and to understand that it's many different things to many different people."

The tour begins in the public seating area in the intersection of Adams and Willoughby streets and leads quickly to the Fulton Mall.

The narrator pointed out several popular shops including Porta Bella Men's Wear, a discount store specializing in suits and dress clothes, and Dr. Jay's, an urban style outlet that carries fancy sneakers and clothes by Ed Hardy and RocWear.

Shoppers bustled in and out of the stores, hankers coaxed consumers to buy their wares and workers shuffled to subway stations and bus stops to head home for the evening. Young men huddled in small groups on the sidewalks, sometimes flirting with groups of young ladies, who were doing the same.

Soon the mall was behind me and my audio guide was leading me down a block on Duffield Street, now symbolically named Abolitionist Place because of its connection to the Underground Railroad. Following the instructions of the narrator, I stopped in front of a building owned by Lewis Greenstein, who says his building was once a stop on that fabled railroad. Greenstein told the story of the day in 2004 when he received an eminent domain notice from the city, which wants to take his building, and several others on the block, so a developer can build an underground parking lot for a hotel.

"The powers that be were not listening to us," Greenstein lamented on the recording. "The little people were being ignored as usual."

From Greenstein's building, I headed over to Metrotech, the giant office complex. On the way, I noticed how different the lively Fulton Mall is from the office zone. Pedestrians strolled down at the sidewalk as though their greatest fear was making eye contact with someone else. And unlike the shoppers on the mall, these people were only passing through.

The narrator explained that residents worry that new development that's already being built as part of the city's Downtown Brooklyn Plan will be too much like Metrotech — cold and uninviting. And that it will



have the same effect on the people who walk through the area.

When I reached the edge of the complex, at the corner of Myrtle Avenue and Flatbush Avenue Extension, the narrator intoned a startling fact through my headphones.

"You have just walked under at least 25 Metrotech surveillance cameras in less than three minutes," the female voice said. "During this entire walking tour you will be recorded by more than 67 Metrotech surveillance cameras."

I turned left toward Metrotech and heard from George Mays. He works at the Post Office on Jay Street and walks through Metrotech every workday.

"Once you step off of Myrtle to Flatbush, Metrotech hits you in the face," Mays said. "It's like they dropped a castle in the middle of nowhere. You get this feeling that you're not welcome. It's like you're walking through a military base. I think that's the best analogy."

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In a recent front-page article, "City bans sign language" (Nov. 24), The Brooklyn Paper misidentified the pharmacist who was holding a picture of a ticket he received from the city. It was Antonia Chemist, co-owner Dennis DiSimone. The Paper regrets the error.



Coffee war!

Which side are you on in battle for caffeinated soul of Bay Ridge?

By Joe Jordan
for The Brooklyn Paper

Count 'em — four. That's how many Starbucks are in all of Vermont. And soon, that's how many will be in Bay Ridge, too.

Ridge residents are abuzz about the coming Starbucks (and it's not just the caffeine) — a development that is forcing people to take sides in a brewing war of "venti" proportions between corporate chains and mom-and-pop coffee shops.

The newest link in the Seattle-based chain will be on Third Avenue between 84th and 85th streets, and is part of the company's reported plan to open 75 more locations in Brooklyn over the coming years.

But some worry that local businesses can't compete with the buying power of the so-called "McDonald's of coffee."

Maryann Brown, co-owner of the nearly 20-year-old neighborhood stalwart Caffe Cafe on Third Avenue, is not happy to see a new Starbucks open up



The Starbucks at the corner of Third Ave and 92nd Street is across the street from well-liked mom-and-pop cafe, Panantico. The Seattle-based java giant is adding a fourth Ridge location (see map), fueling a bitter coffee war. Which side are you on?

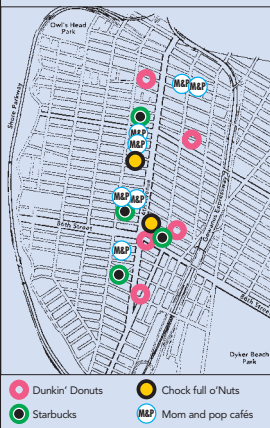
"I don't think it's right," Brown said, citing what she believes to be the difference between community building on the part of independent owners, and corporate profiteering that takes "money out of this neighborhood."

Some residents, however, do not think the chain stores should be demonized as impersonal monsters, and welcome the competition.

"Each neighborhood defines its Starbucks, and you can tell what neighborhood you're in by which Starbucks you walk into," resident Clark Estey told The Brooklyn Paper. The 40-year-old screenwriter went on to praise the company's health benefits and profit sharing, and compared his favorite Starbucks, on 75th St. and Third Avenue, to the popular TV show "Cheers," because "when

The coffee war

A fourth Starbucks in the neighborhood — on top of two Chock full o'Nuts and five Dunkin' Donuts locations — has people wondering if mom and pop can survive.



you go in, everyone knows your name."

Businesses come and go in Bay Ridge all the time, but the neighborhood prides itself on bucking the trend of chain stores.

Last summer, for example, on the very same day Papa John's made headlines for opening next door to a locally owned Sunset Park pizzeria also named John's, a brand new mom-and-pop pizzeria, Zio Toto, broke ground in Bay Ridge.

There are only three chain pizzerias in Bay Ridge, a Domino's, a Papa John's, and a Singas, all located on the outskirts of the neighborhood.

While most businesses remain independently owned, the neighborhood has not been impervious to restaurant chains in the past. Longtime residents may recall Weston's, White Castle, and Roy Rogers — which have been replaced by Nathan's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Burger King, respectively. There are also two McDonald's in Bay Ridge.

Still, these fast-food chains have not posed much of a threat in a town well known for its numerous, regularly packed independently owned restaurants.

So why all the fuss? The four local Starbucks will be competing against five Dunkin' Donuts, two Chock full o'Nuts — and a steady number of mom-and-pop shops that have weathered the chains for many years already.

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STINK...

Continued from page 3

"The minute I walk out of my car it hits me," added Arlene Ross, who lives a few sniffs away. "Whatever they put down there didn't make it better."

But Santa won't be the only one filling up stockings this December. DEP intends to put more pine-dilled socks in the sewers, said agency spokeswoman Mercedes Padilla.

"We are aware of the odor and we are monitoring the situation closely," Padilla said. "We will also be dropping in more pine deodorant socks within the next few weeks."

If that doesn't work, how about some chestnuts roasting on an open fire?

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Jersey brokers fishing for buyers in Slope

'Paradise' just a limo ride away

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

Two New Jersey real-estate brokers are so eager to get Brooklynites to move to their promised land — Montclair — that they're offering free limo rides to the bucolic suburb and complimentary lunches at the town's "Park Slope-style" restaurant, Raymond's.

It's all to get residents of the real Park Slope to toss aside their biases and finally move to what Elaine Pardalos and Kathy Kulik call "Park Slope West" (hmm, isn't that the Gwyneth?).

"Montclair is a very intellectual town and has a great commute, theater, museum, movies, and lots of little places to shop," which creates an "urban-suburban setting," said Pardalos.

Pardalos and Kulik, who created the tour for the Rhodes, Van Note agency, guided the inaugural expedition on Nov. 29, which included a reporter from The Brooklyn Paper and one "curious" Park Slope woman, just Montclair's manicured lawns, colonial houses and the town's center.

Their objective: to prove

Suburban dream?

What's not to love about the suburbs, or at least, Montclair? Sure, the taxes might be through the roof compared to Park Slope (and don't forget car expenses), but with all the money saved on buying a roof over your head, you could still have some money left over for brunch at Raymond's, where who knows which celebrity might drop in for a bite to eat. Here's how the two "towns" match up:

MONTCLAIR	AREA	PARK SLOPE
\$700,000	Price for 3-BR house	\$1.8 million
\$15,000	Annual property taxes	\$3,000
Brookdale Park, which was designed by the sons of Frederick Law Olmsted, who did Prospect Park	Olmsted-designed park	Prospect Park, by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, completed in the 1860s.
45 minutes to Penn Station on New Jersey Transit, plus time to get to a Montclair station	Commute to Manhattan	40 minutes to Herald Square on F-train (on a good day).
\$166	Monthly train pass	\$76
Stephen Colbert, Olympia Dukakis, Bobbi Brown.	Celebrity residents	Jonathan Safran Foer, Maggie Gyllenhaal, John Turturro, Steve Buscemi
Raymond's, on Church Street	Sunday brunch spot	Too many to count!

that, yes, you can own a home in a diverse community with the implausible combination of great public schools, restaurants and a walkable downtown, while still being able to see the Manhattan skyline, albeit through that odd brown cloud

over Union City. Indeed, Montclair is good enough for Pardalos, who moved from Park Slope 13 years ago. "I thought it was going to be dead, but people were walking on the streets and there were restaurants on Valley Road," one

of the main drags, said Pardalos, recalling her first trip to Montclair. "I thought, 'I can do this.'" Many others have been slinking off to the town of 37,000, due west of Manhattan, for the reasons that so many people once abandoned the Upper West Side for Brooklyn. Personal space there isn't at a premium, the pace is sometimes less manic, and there are independent movie theaters and eclectic eateries to assuage discerning, liberal tastes.

Pardalos filled the time spent getting from Brooklyn to Montclair by cheerfully talking about the town's perks, like commuter trains within walking distance and sophisticated events at the Montclair Art Museum. When the "limo" (see side story) emerged in Essex County, the brokers directed it through several residential sections of Montclair and the neighboring towns of hyper-affluent Glen Ridge and middle-class Bloomfield. Keeping in tune with Brooklyn lingo, the tour cruised up "restaurant row" on Bloomfield Avenue, with a wide range of cuisines, and through Brookdale Park, which was designed by the sons of Frederick Olmsted. Prospect Park's co-builder (so Montclair's park is a sequel?)



Promising paradise (which includes an all-American house like the one at left), two New Jersey real-estate brokers are driving Park Slopers to Montclair, where they pitch big backyards and hip, "Brooklyn-style" restaurants, including Raymond's (right).



Promising paradise (which includes an all-American house like the one at left), two New Jersey real-estate brokers are driving Park Slopers to Montclair, where they pitch big backyards and hip, "Brooklyn-style" restaurants, including Raymond's (right).



Our fearless reporter was promised limousine service to New Jersey, but he got a minivan — with no TV!

This is a limo? Minivan subs for style

The Brooklyn Paper

Is this what passes for a limousine in New Jersey? The free limo ride to Montclair turned out to be a minivan. So instead of the VIP treatment, I felt like a kid being whisked to soccer practice.

Perhaps it was not meant to be. According to brokers Elaine Pardalos and Kathy Kulik, the promised limousine suffered engine failure during its virgin voyage across the Hudson on Nov. 29. So Pardalos and Kulik improvised, calling in another spacious vehicle — the ultimate suburban driving machine, a minivan. So much for my dreams of having a uniformed chauffeur — he would have looked preposterous in every soccer mom's favorite car. And there went my hopes of toasting my future life in the suburbs with a tumbler full of booze, poured out of one of those famous crystal limousine decanters. I'll have to wait. Pardalos promised round-trip limo transport for the next tour, sometime in January. —Mike McLaughlin



Coating Prospect Park

Prospect Park took on a wintry glow during the first snowfall on Sunday.

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The Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

December 8, 2007

Boutique heading

Hotel Le Bleu opens just in time to welcome your holiday guests

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Paper

Now that the holiday season is upon us, visits from your family and friends are imminent. And while you may be looking forward to clinking glasses of eggnog together, finding closet space for your visitors' luggage and putting sheets on the sofa bed is a much less appealing prospect — for you and them.

Rest assured, there are now plenty of lodging alternatives in Brooklyn. [See sidebar.] Over the weekend, my husband and I were welcomed into the swank Hotel Le Bleu on the border of Gowanus and Park Slope, which bills itself as "a whole new world of uber-chic glamour and luxurious living." It's an option for your discriminating in-laws or pals.

Opened just last month, the first self-proclaimed "boutique" hotel in the borough has found a unique spot for its discerning clientele: The not-so-lovely Fourth Avenue. Flanking the shiny silver and white building: a Staples store and a taxi depot.

While the location is an unusual choice, hotel General Manager Robert Gaeta maintained that the California-based Globetrot International is simply "ahead of the curve."

"Everyone knows the neighborhood is on the precipice of change," Gaeta said, noting that NoHo, a multi-story condominium, is being built across the street. In addition to new

high-rises under construction, Gaeta cited Fifth Avenue as an attraction.

"Of all the Brooklyn neighborhoods they could have chosen," he said, "Park Slope, with all the restaurants, cool stores and hip music venues has the widest variety in terms of activity." True enough. Yet, over the months I watched the hotel evolve on the long stretch of the still-seedy avenue. I had my doubts.

Pricey Fourth Avenue?

And I kept having them after I heard the rates. According to Gaeta, Le Bleu's rooms begin at \$270 and don't go a penny over \$399. "This is Brooklyn my friend," I thought. While I know boutique hotels in Manhattan can go for well above that, come on! You're on Fourth Avenue, one side of the hotel looks onto a U-Haul parking lot.

My concern wasn't assuaged when we pulled into the small parking area in front of the hotel, where a bored receptionist could be spotted behind the glass. Nor was it quelled by the sight of the front lobby.

If you choose to enter through the foyer, where one is invited to conduct "discreet business tete-a-tetes," it is during the day, when the sun warms the space, or arrive before your guest and meet in the room. Compared to the entrance at night, supermarket



The Brooklyn Paper's Gregory H. Papp



The Brooklyn Paper's Tina Barry

Steady accommodations: Among the bed and breakfasts and hotels in Brooklyn, Hotel Le Bleu, which opened last month, sets itself apart with its "boutique" status. Designer Andreas Escobar added extra blue to the guest rooms by making the occupant of the shower stall visible through clear glass.

Bleu peep show

Finally, the term "boutique" started making sense as we walked to our room. Exiting the elevator, I noticed a silver sign against a chocolate-brown wall, with the floor's number etched out Chelsea gallery-style. The lighting was moody, and the designer, Andreas Escobar of the eponymous Montreal-based firm, was careful to use texture throughout the building to create a sense of drama.

The room's modern interior — although not glitch free — was sexy and amusing. Escobar has found a way to utilize every inch of the limited space in each of the 48 rooms. The designer carved out an efficient work area equipped with standard perks like Internet, as well as an iPod docking station. The king-size bed functions not only as a sleeping area but a theater of sorts — to watch the 42-inch plasma TV with Sony DVD system and anytime-you-want-it-HBO (the selection of drama, classics and comedy are fairly limited, while the porn listings are vast).

This is a room that functions perfectly for a quick hookup or as a getaway for couples who know each other well. I've shared a bathroom with my husband for 23 years, and yet, I felt like a peep show performer in the large, clear glass shower stall that juts into the room — as I'm sure Escobar intended. (A

See LE BLEU on page 11

Brooklyn hotels, bed & breakfasts

AKWABA MANSION

347 MacDonough St. at Stuyvesant Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 455-5958, www.akwabamansion.com. Room rate: \$183 per night during the week and \$200 per weekend night.

Amenities: Jacuzzis in some rooms, game room, library, private garden, complimentary Southern breakfast.

Parking: Street parking only.

Subway: A and C to Utica Avenue.

ATLANTIC INN

1768 Atlantic Ave. at Utica Avenue in Crown Heights, (718) 771-7171, www.atlanticinn.com. Room rate: \$102 and up per night during the week and \$146 and up per weekend night.

Amenities: LCD TV with HBO, pillow-top mattress, spa rooms, high-speed wireless internet, hair dryer. Parking: Free on-site parking.

Subway: A and C to Utica Avenue.

THE AWESOME BED AND BREAKFAST

136 Lawrence St. at Willoughby Street in Downtown Brooklyn, (718) 858-4859, www.awesome-bed-and-breakfast.com. Room rate: \$130 per night during the week and \$185 per weekend night.

Amenities: Free wireless internet and cable television in the common room, complimentary continental breakfast.

Parking: Street parking only.

Subway: 2 and 3 to Hoyt Street.

THE BED AND BREAKFAST ON THE PARK

113 Prospect Park West at Seventh Street in Park Slope, (718) 499-0115, www.bdbonpark.com. Room rate: \$175 per night during the week and \$225 per weekend night.

Amenities: Complimentary breakfast, park views, claw foot tub and working fireplace. One room has a private rooftop garden with skyline views.

Parking: Street parking only.

Subway: F to Seventh Avenue.

BEST WESTERN

833 Fourth Ave. at 83rd Street in Bay Ridge, (718) 238-3737, www.bestwestern.com. Room rate: \$214.95 per night during the week and \$219.95 per weekend night.

Amenities: Cafe Gregory restaurant and bar, deluxe suites, valet parking, complimentary continental breakfast.

See HOTELS on page 11

MUSIC

Santa's slay

Most everyone whom GO Brooklyn knows is asking for a Nintendo Wii from Santa this year, but if the Tiger Lillies have their way, we'll all be getting "Suicide for Christmas."

The trio of musicians, known for an annual Halloween show at St. Ann's Warehouse and macabre projects like "Shock-headed Peter," an opera that assigns cruel punishments for children's vices, is turning its eye to Christmas with its latest show, which opens at St. Ann's on Dec. 13.

When I was a small child, I was a firm believer in Santa Claus and enjoyed Christmas morning like no other.

"Suicide for Christmas," the group's founder, via e-mail from Greece. "As one gets older, the best you can hope for is a sense of indifference, [of] not feeling suicidal."

So, with a sharp tongue and healthy sense of the absurd, Jacques and bandmates Adrian Hoge and Adrian Stout composed the show, which is meant to turn the holiday traditions of Rockettes and nutcrackers on their head.

"We thought it might be funny to do a whole show based on suicide," mused Jacques.

So, if your idea of holiday cheer is "It's a Wonderful Life," this might not be the show for you.

"It's a show that people who hate Christmas should come to. It's not for all the family, and life is not a bowl of cherries," said Jacques. "There will be no elves. ... Actually, we'll probably have lots of elves committing suicide as our stage decoration."

"Suicide for Christmas" will be performed at 8 pm on Dec. 13, 14 and 15 at St. Ann's Warehouse (38 Water St. at Dock Street in DUMBO). Tickets are \$32.50. For information, call (718) 254-8779 or visit www.stannswarehouse.org.

— Daniel Goldberg

CINEMA

'Match' point

Look out, Cannes! It was only last week that the Gotham Awards brought film superstars like Uma Thurman and Kyra Sedgwick to Brooklyn, yet the borough is already gearing up for another exciting cinematic celebration: the Brooklyn Heights Jewish Film Festival.

Now in its fourth year, the festival was created by Rabbi Simcha Weinstein of Congregation B'nai Avraham as a way to start a dialogue with people who might not be comfortable coming to a religious service or class.

"We want to celebrate art as a way to explore Jewish identity," he said. "We always draw in a nice crowd this time of year, right around Hanukkah when people are feeling Jewish."

The 2007 lineup kicks off on Dec. 8 with "Match and Marry," a look at a modern-day matchmaker in New York, and continues with "Voyage: A Journey to Jewish Joy," filmmaker Paul Mazursky's documentary (pictured) about the annual pilgrimage of Hasidic Jews to Uman in the Ukraine (screening on Saturday, Dec. 15); and "Creating Harmony: The Displaced Persons Orchestra From St. Outlien," which follows an orchestra whose players are also Holocaust survivors (screening on Saturday, Dec. 22).

"Some of the films we're showing have never been shown before in Brooklyn," said Weinstein, who chose the movies, in part, because of their positive messages for all filmmakers.

"There are different flames of Judaism," he said, "but we're all part of the same Menorah."

The Brooklyn Heights Jewish Film Festival begins with "Match and Marry" at 8 pm on Saturday, Dec. 8 at Congregation B'nai Avraham (117 Roman St. at Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights). Tickets to each event are \$5 and reservations are recommended. For more information and a complete schedule, call (718) 596-4840.

— Daniel Goldberg

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Holiday gift guide

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By Adam Rathe and Lisa J. Curtis

For the genuine article

(At left) Alabaster and brass (with antique silver finish) wall sconce, \$599. At Lamp Warehouse, 1073 39th St. at Fort Hamilton Parkway in Borough Park, (718) 436-2207.

For the at-home barista

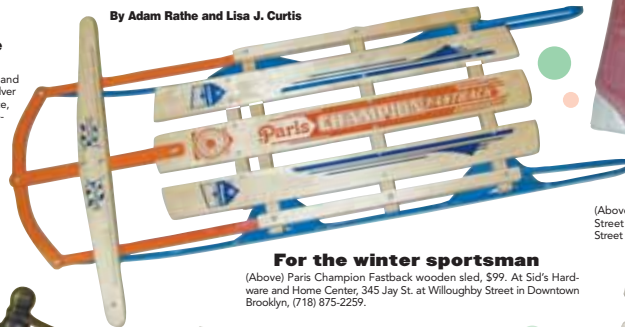
(At right) Zassenhouse coffee mill, \$59.99. At American Housewares, 85 Court St. at Hoyt Street in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 243-0844.

For the urban equestrian

(At left) Wrangler denim Christmas stocking, \$15. At Debbie's Reins and Things, 322 Douglass St. at Fourth Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 797-5266.

For stylish storage

(Below) Bajab hand-blown glass vase, \$160. At Jewels by Satnick, 187 State St. at Court Street in Downtown Brooklyn, (718) 852-1421.



For the winter sportsman

(Above) Paris Champion Fastback wooden sled, \$99. At Sid's Hardware and Home Center, 345 Jay St. at Willoughby Street in Downtown Brooklyn, (718) 875-2259.

For the Lego fanatic

(At left) Global Views candleholder sprockets, \$20 each. At Rico, 384 Atlantic Ave. at Bond Street in Boerum Hill, (718) 797-2077, www.shoprico.com.

For the stylish scribbler

(Above) Antioch jacket journal, \$13.95. At Court Street Office Supplies, 44 Court St. at Joralemon Street in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 625-5771.

For the young

(Above) Singing bear with eight pieces of milk chocolate Hanukkah gelt, \$30. At JoMart Chocolates, 2917 Ave. R at Nostrand Avenue in Marine Park, (718) 375-1277, www.jomartchocolates.com.

For the serious chef

(At right) Kikuichi Tsuchine seven-inch all-purpose knife, \$204. At The Brooklyn Kitchen, 616 Lorimer St. at Skillman Avenue in Williamsburg, (718) 389-2982, www.the-brooklynkitchen.com.

For the pet-deprived

(At left) Greenpiece moss-on-frame dog topiary, \$170. At Dig, 479 Atlantic Ave. at Nevins Street in Boerum Hill, (718) 554-0207, www.gardendig.com.

For the chocoholic

(At left) Jacques Torres Chocolate Pure Bliss fudge brownie mix from King Arthur Flour, \$12.95. At Jacques Torres Chocolate, 66 Water St. at Main Street in DUMBO, (718) 875-9772.

Floor 'em

(At left) Shaw "Impressions" orbit pattern olefin rug, 5-feet, 5-inches by 7-feet, 8-inches, \$380. Available in a variety of sizes and prices. At Boro Rug & Carpet, 1141 37th St. at Fort Hamilton Parkway in Borough Park, (718) 853-3600, www.bororug.com.

For the fitness buff

(At left) Gift certificates available in any denomination. At Harbor Fitness, 191 15th St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues in Park Slope, (718) 965-6200, and 9215 Fourth Ave. between 92nd and 93rd streets in Bay Ridge, (718) 238-9400, www.harborfitness.com.



LE BLEU...

Continued from page 9

sheer white curtain can be pulled around the glass for the inhibited.)

Where's the booze?

After turning on the TV and seeing "Hello Barry, Tina" on the screen, we decided to get out for a while and see just how convenient the hotel was to the Slope's nightlife.

We headed to the still-lovely French bistro Cocotte on Fifth Avenue and Fourth Street. If we had opted for an evening in Manhattan, the M, R and F trains are a five-minute walk from the hotel. (For anyone who is interested, Sunday is BYOB at Cocotte with no corkage fee.)

Back at the hotel, I opened the little refrigerator in the room, expecting a stocked mini-bar. (After all, the hotel claims to "reflect the needs of sophisticated global travelers.") I imagine my dismay upon finding just two blue bottles of Le Bleu water.

Also missing at the moment is the Vac, the two-level cocktail bar and restaurant that's slated to occupy the eighth and ninth floors of the hotel by late spring. Gaeta said the Vac's menu will be "Continental."

"They like steaks," he said of Chris and Eddie Arias, who will operate the eatery.

organic toiletries provided. The "allergen-free goose down comforter" looked inviting, and the "special woven Egyptian cotton linens with 250 thread count" felt like silk.

LODGING

Hotel Le Bleu (370 Fourth Ave. between Third and Fifth streets in Park Slope) scores American Express, Diners Club, Discover, MasterCard and Visa. Rates: \$270-\$399. To reserve, call (718) 625-1500 or visit www.hotelbleu.com.

This is the point in the story when I walk to the door and hang the "Do Not Disturb" sign on the knob. Cut to an orchid in bloom (the flower is a signature of the hotel) or sun setting over, well, not the Gowanus, and you know the rest.

HOTELS...

Continued from page 9

Parking: \$20 per night during the week and \$200 per weekend night.

BROOKLYN MOTOR INN

140 Hamilton Ave. at Bowne Street in Carroll Gardens, (718) 875-2500, www.brooklynmotorinn.com. Room rate: \$107.17 per night during the week and \$129.22 per weekend night. Amenities: On-site coffee and snack machines, wake-up calls, photocopy machine, fax machine, premium TV channels. Parking: Free on-site parking. Subway: F and G to Carroll Street.

COMFORT INN

279 Butler St. at Nevins Street in Gowanus, (718) 855-9000, www.comfortinn.com. Room rate: \$149 and up per night. Amenities: Complimentary breakfast, wireless internet throughout the hotel, free local calls, 24-hour concierge service. Parking: \$24 per night on-site.

Subway: R at Union Street

COMFORT INN

3218 Emmons Ave. between Coyle and Bragg streets in Sheepshead Bay, (718) 368-3334, www.comfortinn.com. Room rate: \$130 per night during the week and \$200 per weekend night. Amenities: Exercise room, complimentary continental breakfast and weekday newspaper. Parking: Free on-site parking. Subway: Q to Sheepshead Bay.

HARBOR MOTOR INN

1730 Shore Place, between Bay Parkway and 26th Avenue in Bay Ridge, (718) 946-9200. Room rate: \$79 per night during the week and \$94 per weekend night. Amenities: Views of Verazano-Narrows Bridge. Parking: Free on-site parking. Subway: No subway in the vicinity. B6 bus stops in front of the inn.

HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS

625 Union St. between Third and Fourth avenues in Gowanus, (718) 797-1133, www.ihotelgroup.com. Room rate: \$277 and up per night during the week and \$325 and up per weekend night. Amenities: Free wireless high-speed internet access, complimentary continental breakfast buffet. Parking: \$20 per day on-site. Subway: R to Union Street.

HOTEL LE BLEU

370 Fourth Ave. at Fifth Street in Park Slope, (718) 625-1500, www.hotelbleu.com. Room rate: \$270 and up per night during the week and \$399 per weekend night. Amenities: Ergonomic beds with orthopedic mattresses, 300-thread count Egyptian sheets and down comforters, plasma TVs, Bose DVD/VCR radios and high-speed internet. Parking: Free on-site parking. Subway: M, F and R to Fourth Avenue and Ninth Street.

MARRIOTT-BROOKLYN BRIDGE

333 Adams St. at Tilley Street in Downtown Brooklyn, (718) 246-7000, www.marriott.com. Room rate: \$299 and up per night during the week and \$399 and up per weekend night. Amenities: 12,000-square foot fitness center with lap pool, hot tub and sauna, HD-TV, in-room high-speed internet access, premium cable. Parking: \$30 per day on-site. Subway: A, C and F to Jay Street.

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16 Fort Greene Pl. at DeKalb Avenue in Fort Greene, (718) 834-9253. Room rate: \$99-\$120 per night for a single room, \$199-\$179 per night for a double room. Amenities: Complimentary breakfast. Parking: Street parking only. Subway: R to DeKalb Avenue.

THE UNION STREET BED AND BREAKFAST

405 Union St. between Smith and Hoyt streets in Carroll Gardens, (718) 852-8406, www.unionbrooklynbedandb.com. Room rate: \$125 for a room with one twin bed, \$165 for a room with a queen bed or two smaller beds. Amenities: Continental breakfast, HBO. Parking: Street parking only. Subway: F and G to Carroll Street.

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December 8, 2007



Diner dash

Visiting Bklyn's endangered outposts of comfort food

By Bryan Rucker
for The Brooklyn Paper

The sad news came in September. St. Clair Restaurant, a diner and Boerum Hill institution since 1967, had changed ownership and was about to be completely renovated in order to better fit into the increasingly upscale Smith Street.

Now I like tasting menus and wine pairings as much as the next guy, but if any street in Brooklyn needs an unpretentious diner, it's Smith Street. Hip restaurants like The Grocery, Saul and Chestnut may have revolutionized the local food scene, but all the "meet the farmer" dinners and Michelin stars in the world can't buy you a plate of disco fries and a \$4 martini.

So for the last couple of weeks, I've traveled all across the borough to pay tribute to the kind of old-fashioned diners and coffee shops that will never be mistaken for hip.

Arch Diner

This diner on the Flatlands-Canarsie border is technically accessible by the B47 bus, but its huge parking lot illustrates that southeastern Brooklyn's preferred mode of transportation is indeed the automobile. Seated in neon and silver, the Arch looks the most 1950s of all the diners I visited, and the radio was tuned to the oldies station for added legitimacy. (Surprisingly, the Arch Diner didn't open until 1974.)

I ordered the rolled strawberry pancakes, which technically were not rolled at all, but folded and bursting with super-sweet strawberry pie filling both inside and out.

Upon asking a busby whether they take credit cards, I got a non-committal "maybe."

"You asked him?" my waiter chuckled. "He doesn't understand anything."

The staff at Applewood is never that funny. Arch Diner (1846 Ralph Ave. at Flatlands Avenue in Flatlands) accepts American Express, MasterCard and Visa. Dinner entrees: \$8.95-\$16.95. The eatery is open 24 hours a day. By bus: B47 to Flatlands Avenue. For more information, call (718) 531-3718.

Bridgeview Diner

I never thought I would feel underdressed in a diner, but the tuxedoed

hosts at Gus Pandel's Bay Ridge restaurant had me second-guessing my Gap hoodie.

Open since 1981 but looking brand new, its renovated booths and subuded atmosphere make the Bridgeview a perfect place for a family dinner, working lunch or even a date. The menu ups the ante as well, and although the "chicken fantasia" (chicken breast, mushrooms, tomatoes, artichokes, wine cream sauce) sounded tempting, I settled on a tuna and hard-boiled egg triple-decker served with a delightfully chive heavy potato salad.

The highlight, surprisingly, was the coleslaw. Usually a diner throwaway, the Bridgeview's recipe is creamy, crunchy and addictively sweet.

Bridgeview Diner (2011 Third Ave. at 90th Street in Bay Ridge) accepts American Express, MasterCard and Visa. Dinner entrees: \$9.95-\$22.95. Open 24 hours a day. Subway: R to 86th Street. For more information, call (718) 680-

9818 or visit the Web site www.bridgeviewdiner.com.

Daisy's Diner

Boldly discarding the chrome and neon clichés, this 72-year-old Park Slope diner looks like a cheerful small town cafe. "The place has been here since 1935," said owner John Kamitsis, who took over Daisy's in 2002. "It used to be a German ice cream parlor-luncheonette and the owner lived upstairs. (The decor) has changed gradually with the times, until it became this present look. It evolved with the neighborhood." Part of that evolution has included the addition of a classic red London phone booth.

"On Halloween, someone put a Superman in there!" recalled Kamitsis with a laugh.

Sampling food for this story had begun to leave me feeling as though I'd been exposed to strength-depleting Kryptonite, so I desperately needed some veggies.

I ordered the salad "mixta," mixed greens with tomatoes, olives, roasted red peppers, mozzarella and freshly sautéed eggplant, but because I am a self-destructive glutton, I washed my salad down with a steaming plate of disco fries.

Now if those hungry Fort Greene residents want to learn what to do with all of those sundries, they should head over to the Brooklyn



Nothing's finer: The counter and staff at the Bridgeview Diner, above and below left, are polished to perfection.

My only other experience with this classic New York gut bomb — fries smothered in American cheese and thick brown gravy — has been at three in the morning after a night of "discing." Daisy's version is so good, I finished it stone cold sober.

Top that, Clark Kent.

Daisy's Diner (452 Fifth Ave. between Ninth and 10th streets in Park Slope) accepts American Express, MasterCard and Visa. Dinner entrees: \$8.95-\$17.95. Open 24 hours a day. Subway: F to Fourth Avenue or R to Ninth Street. For more information, call (718) 788-1438.

Kellogg's Diner

Serving Williamsburg for 80 years, Kellogg's is an anachronism in an increasingly sanitized neighborhood.

The patrons come in two varieties: skinny hipster (burger and fries) and Slavic construction worker (steak and chicken combination with onion rings on top, mashed potatoes, broccoli).

Although the raucous blue booths and red tables added some life to the proceedings, primary colors could only distract me for so long. The best thing I can say about my unannually yellow French toast is that at least it completed the color wheel.

Although the Fotodimitrakis brothers' diner/bodega combo looks a little shabby, a manager told me some renovations would start in December.

Kellogg's Diner (514 Metropolitan Ave. at Union Avenue in Williamsburg) accepts cash only. Dinner entrees: \$6.95-\$14.95. The eatery is open 24 hours a day. Subway: L to Lorimer Street or G to Metropolitan Avenue. For more information, call (718) 782-4502.

The kitchen's closed right now, Hon," the waitress told me as I sat down. "The health inspector's here."

Nick Statthos's Kings Plaza Diner must have passed the inspection with flying colors because my curly fries came out in 15 minutes — tops. With a menu biblically in size and scope, curly fries might seem a timid choice, but they were perfectly greasy, spicy and piping hot.

If you're adventurous, try the chopped baby veal platter charbroiled, served on an open pita with peach halves and cottage cheese topped with "old-fashioned" granola flakes.

I'll stick to the curly fries.

Kings Plaza Diner (4124 Ave. U, between Hendrickson and "Colon" streets in Marine Park) accepts Amer-

ican Express, MasterCard and Visa. Dinner entrees: \$13.95-\$24.95. The eatery is open daily, 6 am-2 am. Bus: B2, B3, B5, B41, B46, B47 to Kings Plaza. For more information, call (718) 951-6700.

Park Plaza Restaurant

Nick Likourontzos and his family have owned this diner near the Brooklyn Bridge for all of its 25 years, and he and his brother Dimitri know each of the regulars by name. Walking up and down the aisles, they greet their aging customers like family, checking in and making sure everything is perfect. My homemade lemon-coconut cake nearby was, layered with whipped cream and light enough that I could easily have ordered a second.

The Park Plaza looks like your grandparents' house, strewn with potted plants and exposed wood. Its lone concessions to modernity were little televisions along some of the booths promising "DivaVision: Bringing you music videos, games, television, and more."

By the time I visited in late November, timed and ornaments dominated the walls and a six-foot Christmas tree stood by the door. Above the bar hung a "Happy Hanukkah" sign, an inclusive gesture in an inclusive place.

Park Plaza Restaurant (220 Cadman Plaza West at Pineapple Walk in Brooklyn Heights) accepts American Express, Cash, MasterCard, Visa. Dinner entrees: \$9.95 to \$22.95. Open 7 am to 1:30 am Sunday through Thursday and 24 hours on Fridays and Saturdays. Subway: C to High Street and 2.3 to Clark Street. Parking lot available for \$2 per hour with a two-hour maximum. For more information, call (718) 596-5900 or www.parkplazarestaurant.com.

Vegas Diner

Sadly, I found no slot machines upon entering this misleadingly named Bensonhurst eatery, which opened in 1982. Although its wood paneling and potted plants are reminiscent of the very Brady "70s, the huge "Theme Colon Don't Run" American flag on the back wall transported me straight to 2001.

Stick-looking "Godfather" types shared a table by the window, while an exhausted woman at the booth next to mine read the specials aloud to her elderly mother. Owners Alex and Ted (who declined to give a surname) have set up mini jukeboxes in every booth which play everything from Sinatra to Chamillionaire while customers can decide among the potest-looking cocktails pictured on every placemat.

I skipped the booze for a cup of coffee and ordered a broccoli and cheese omelet, which was the size of my head and bursting with veggies.

My only complaint: cold meat. I shared a table by the window, while an exhausted woman at the booth next to mine read the specials aloud to her elderly mother. Owners Alex and Ted (who declined to give a surname) have set up mini jukeboxes in every booth which play everything from Sinatra to Chamillionaire while customers can decide among the potest-looking cocktails pictured on every placemat.

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BREAKING

Much like Moses coming down Mt. Sinai with the 10 Commandments, restaurant guru Tim Zagat handed down his new "Best of Brooklyn" guide on Dec. 5. The slim volume features 216 restaurants, 141 bars and clubs, 213 gourmet entertaining resources and a whole lot more. And while GO Brooklyn normally prefers the sage wisdom of Tim Zagat, even we have to admit that Zagat knows his stuff. The guide gives raves to institutions like Peter Luger and Di Fara, but knows that newcomers like Po and Lucali are great, too.

You can pick up a copy at Barnes and Noble (106 Court St. at State Street in Downtown Brooklyn). If the dining hall food isn't doing the trick for Pratt Students, beginning Dec. 10, they'll have a new spot to fuel up at: **Autor du Monde** (860 Fulton St. at Clinton Avenue in Fort Greene) will be serving French fare and mixing cocktails for neighborhood sophisticates and thirsty students alike. Meanwhile up the street, tannin titan Amy Bennett is branching out.

CHEWS

Public Library's central branch on Grand Army Plaza on Saturday, Dec. 8 at 4 pm to see **Arthur "The Food Maven" Schwartz** discuss his favorite holiday foods. And if you can't make that, stop by the **Salt Marsh Nature Center** (3302 Ave. U at East 33rd Street in Sheepshead Bay) on Dec. 16 for a roundtable discussion about the eateries that have made our borough a famous dining hotspot. One of the dishes that has contributed to Brooklyn's culinary fame is unquestionably pizza. And with the opening of **Bella Marzenka's** (168 Driggs Ave., at Diamond Street in Greenpoint), the tradition of a great Brooklyn slice

lives on. Although the "brick oven" that the awning promises looks suspiciously like a plain old hotbox to us, the pizza and specialties — like the already legendary sausage roll with peppers — are still mighty fine. Not into pizza? Marzenka's has an entire counter dedicated to Polish fare. Finally, a hearty welcome to the rehabbed menu, now featuring an Indian buffet, at the former **D Space** location at the corner of Jay and Front streets in DUMBO, which is rumored to now be called **Marrakech Express**...but wouldn't that be Moroccan? No matter, for \$6 you can fill a takeout carton and have more than enough for lunch. Got a hot dining tip? Drop us a line at BreakingCheWS@BrooklynPaper.com. — Adam Rathe

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King for a day

Bedford-Stuyvesant songstress gets ready to take the pop star throne

By Adam Rathe
The Brooklyn Paper

Kelly King's debut album is called "Live The Dream," and the pop singer, hailing from Bedford-Stuyvesant via Nashville, seems to be doing just that.

Her single, "I Don't Wanna Sing That Song," is rising up the Adult Contemporary charts, and she has plans to begin touring in 2008 with an as-yet-unnamed "major" headliner. But like Whitney Houston and Beyoncé, King's path to the pop charts began closer to candlelight than the spotlight.

"I started singing because my mother was a singer in her church choir and every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday we were there," said King in an exclusive interview with GO Brooklyn at the Roebeling Tea Room. "From the time I could run around on my own two feet, I was always at the church and [my mother] was always singing."

It wasn't long before King herself took the mic. Before she was 3 years old, King was leading her mother's choir in a rendition of "Silent Night," and at age 6, she began performing professionally.

"I've been in bars and clubs as long as I can remember. My

parents are very into music and the scene in Nashville is incredible," said King, who counts Elvis Presley and Celine Dion among her influences. But unlike other showbiz kids who never left the club scene, King is all business when she's at a venue.

"I've never had a drink, done drugs or smoked," said

MUSIC

Kelly King's "Live the Dream" is available from www.warner.com for \$16.98. For information, visit www.kellykingrecords.com.

King, who's in her early 20s. "Maybe it's because I was in the bar scene from such a young age that I never wanted to be like that."

Even as her career in Nashville blossomed, working on Christian children's records like "Kids Sing the Gospels," King was sure that her hometown was a launching pad and not the final destination.

"I always wanted to be in New York, even from a very young age," she said. "I had a dance space at home and had a fake Broadway street sign [hanging on the wall] — I was always Broadway bound."

But while her talent was growing, King herself had stopped. At only 5-foot-2, finding work as a dancer would be a tall order.

"I realized my

dream of being a Rockette was not coming true," she said, "and that's when I turned all of my energy towards singing."

"I tried in Nashville, and they just didn't get it. It's mainly because I'm not country or contemporary Christian. I was told that I would have to go to New York or Los Angeles. I visited both places and hated the vibe in L.A. I visited New York and knew it was for me."

Like most artists who take a chance on fame in New York, King had to start at the bottom. And while Madonna was a coat check girl at the Russian Tea Room in the 1980s, King managed to avoid the restaurant route and score a rather impressive first job on her first try.

"I was offered a contract to perform on a cruise ship that ported out of New York City each week. I figured that I would be on a ship for six months, and that 3,000 people were on each week, so there had to be a chance that someone in the music industry would take the cruise. I was the lead singer on the ship, so I knew that I would get a lot of attention," recalled King. "I took the contract, and sure enough, in that six-month period of time, there was one person of significance in the music industry. And he's my manager to this day."

Since docking good three years ago, King has made a home for herself in Brooklyn — and not singing on a boat cruising down the Gowanus. She's settled, along with her two dogs, Storm and Cesar, in a house in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and she couldn't be happier.



King's county: Pop singer Kelly King chatted about what it takes to climb the charts on Nov. 9 at the Roebeling Tea Room in Williamsburg.

neighborhood is unreal," said King. "Jay-Z and Lil' Kim are from there. The culture and vibe really drive my energy. The music that goes on in the streets makes it very artistic and beautiful, and I'm proud to be a part of it. Even if I got all the money in the world, I wouldn't move to Manhattan."

With "I Don't Wanna Sing That Song" hitting 23 on the charts, it's now the biggest Adult Contemporary single from an independent release ever, King said.

But she still has a long road ahead of her. In addition to touring early next year — King will be opening for a big name, but couldn't say who just yet — and making the rounds of Manhattan's gay bar karaoke nights ("You've heard of Bathhouse Bette [Mallory]? They call me Karaoke Kelly"),

King is dealing with the day-to-day struggles of a rising, if not yet profitable, star. "I live for being on stage and singing," she said. "The amazing thing is that I'm the most successful I've ever been, and I'm also the poorest."

Before long, we bet King will be royally flush.

Armchair art in DUMBO

There's a new gallery on the scene in DUMBO, and it brings more to the table than just pricey prints and free merlot. In fact, it actually brings the table.

Quincy Ballon opened GalleryQB in October, and it's quickly become the hot spot for design savvy locals looking to outfit their swanky new digs.

The gallery carries exquisite pieces such as \$300 hand-beaded African figures (pictured), and mixes them with vintage modern furniture with splatly, gilded sculptures — and large, bright canvases. "Because I'm located in the DUMBO market and not Manhattan, I can offer similar — and in some cases identical — inventory as [Manhattan stores] at a reduced rate," said Ballon (pronounced "bah-lun") who lives just a block away from his store.

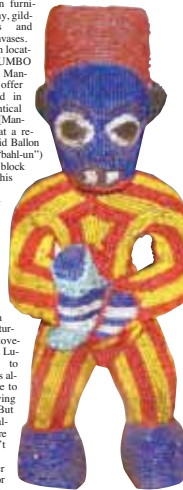
And the inventory is enough to make any furniture aficionado green with envy. With a zebra wood desk with lacquered goat-skin finish by Karl Springer, a rounded bright turquoise Knoll loveseat and several Lucite pieces to choose from, it's almost impossible to keep from blowing your budget. But according to Ballon, his prices are set so you don't have to.

The Springer desk "retails for \$1,500 at GalleryQB and the same desk at competing Manhattan dealers is \$7,500," he said.

And there are a few tempting items for those of us who haven't scored a million-dollar DUMBO condo but still want to decorate like we've got that kind of cash.

"I like to also throw in pieces that are accessible to everyone," said Ballon. "Like a \$100 lamp."

GalleryQB (163 Plymouth St. at Jay Street in DUMBO) is open Tuesday through Friday, from noon to 7 pm, and weekends, from 11 am to 6 pm. For information, call (718) 222-1885 or visit www.galleryqb.com. — Juliana Bunim



The algo-rhythm

Kelly King might have the MTV-friendly look of your everyday pop tart, but she's got a voice that growls and purrs like an old school blues better. We know she's got a soft spot for karaoke and wouldn't be surprised if these ladies were some of her favorites. Listening to "Live the Dream" reminded us of all three.

King has the range and glass-shattering vocal ability of Mariah Carey, and as of now, she has none of the crazy. Add Mariah's operatic talents to...

The dance beats of Aussie superstar Kylie Minogue's hit record "Fever." We just can't get her out of our head, especially if you throw in a pinch of ...

Good old country music. King's "I'm a Fool" could be Fatsy Clooney's "Walkin' After Midnight" for a new generation. Add 'em together, and you'll get ...



Kelly King's "Live the Dream."

BROOKLYN

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Red White & Bubbly is pleased to announce the release of our very own wine—Brooklyn Wine Co.

Brooklyn Wine Co. was established by Red White & Bubbly to celebrate the spirit of Brooklyn through wine. We work closely with specially selected winemakers from around the world to create unique wines that we are happy to offer to our friends in Brooklyn.

As passionate Brooklynites, we desired a strong connection between our home and the wines we create. We relish the opportunity to use our labels as a way of highlighting Brooklyn's rich artistic and cultural heritage through local artistry that continues to advance the renaissance of our great borough.

We owe our inaugural series of wine labels to the foresight of the Brooklyn Bridge's architect and designer, John Roebeling. Roebeling was captivated by the skies that would preside over his landmark, understanding that his bridge would often become a silhouette against a backdrop of unimaginable colors. The Brooklyn Bridge, overlaid on various skylines captures the soul of our wines and pays tribute to Roebeling and his vision.

On display at the shop are the original oil on canvas paintings by artist Ryan Seslow which were the inspiration for our inaugural series of labels.

Look for our newest collection of wines from The North Fork of Long Island coming soon.



Cheers,
Darrin Siegfried & Adam Goldstein
Co-Owners of Red White & Bubbly



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What the 'Huck'?

Until now, late night food and drink on the eastern edge of Williamsburg usually meant beer and a slice of pizza, but with the opening of Huckleberry Bar on Grand Avenue at Lorimer Street, all of that has changed.

The cozy, modern space opened in October, and is helmed by Stephanie Schneider and Andy Bogos, two neighborhood residents and long-time fine-dining experts. Schneider and Bogos met while working at Blue Moon, Danny Meyer's tony Manhattan barbecue joint, but have decided to put their talents to use a little closer to home.

"Both of us have lived here for awhile and felt the neighborhood was missing something," Schneider told GO Brooklyn.

"It's growing rapidly, but the businesses aren't growing as fast. I see the progress with the restaurants, but they usually close at 11 or midnight, so then where do you go? We want to extend that experience."

And what an experience it is. Alongside a sturdy wine list and plenty of beer, Huckleberry Bar offers a wide array of fancy, seasonal cocktails — hot buttered rum made with house-infused vanilla and allspice rum for \$8 — and high-end sandwiches prepared by another white-tablecloth ex-patriot, chef Seth Johnson. GO Brooklyn likes a drink now and again ("though mostly now"), but even we would stop by for Johnson's tasty treats, like the prosciutto with aged gouda and apple butter sandwich, which goes for a

reasonable \$8.

With a strong emphasis on hospitality, a couple of hours of slightly DJs keeping the bar crowded, Huckleberry Bar seems to be on its way to becoming a neighborhood favorite.

"As far as hospitality, we planned a lot from Danny Meyer," said Schneider. "You take care of each other, your guests and your community... Hospitality has to be in your nature, so you can't teach people that."

Huckleberry Bar (588 Grand St. at Lorimer Street in Williamsburg) is open daily from 4 p.m. to 4 a.m. For information, call (718) 218-8555 or visit www.huckleberrybar.com

— Sarah McCormick



BROOKLYN Nightlife

Compiled by Chiara V. Curran

BAY RIDGE

The Salty Dog

7509 Third Ave. at 76th Street in Bay Ridge (718) 228-9260.
www.saltydogbar.com

Fridays, Saturdays: Live D.J.s, 9 p.m. FREE. Wednesdays: Karaoke Night, 9 p.m. FREE.

The Wicked Monk

8415 First Ave. at 84th Street in Bay Ridge (718) 571-0001.
www.wickedmonk.com

Dec. 8: Tommy "Sandy" O'Connor, 8 p.m. \$5, Big Sick, 9 p.m. \$5. Dec. 9: Rain or Shine, 9 p.m. \$5. Dec. 13: Stand-Up comedy night, 9 p.m. \$5. Dec. 14: The Krip. 9 p.m. \$5. Dec. 15: Stand-Up comedy, 9 p.m. \$5. Dec. 16: Stand-Up comedy, 9 p.m. \$5. Dec. 17: Stand-Up comedy, 9 p.m. \$5.

BEDFORD-STUYVESANT

Food 4 Thought

445 Marcus Garvey Blvd. at Macdonough Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant (718) 424-1660.
www.food4thought.com

Saturdays: Open mic, 9 p.m. \$5. Tuesdays: Philosophical Pub Tuesday, 9 p.m. \$5. Wednesdays: Open mic, 9 p.m. \$5. Thursdays: Open mic, 9 p.m. \$5. Fridays: Open mic, 9 p.m. \$5. Saturdays: Open mic, 9 p.m. \$5.

Sista's Place

456 Nostrand Ave. at Jefferson Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant (718) 986-7666.
www.sistasplace.com

Dec. 8: Rona McLean Group, 9 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: Rona McLean Group, 9 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: Rona McLean Group, 9 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: Rona McLean Group, 9 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: Rona McLean Group, 9 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: Rona McLean Group, 9 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: Rona McLean Group, 9 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: Rona McLean Group, 9 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: Rona McLean Group, 9 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: Rona McLean Group, 9 p.m. \$10.

BOERUM HILL

Hank's Saloon

46 Third Ave. at Atlantic Avenue in Boerum Hill (718) 425-4003.
www.hanksaloon.com

Sundays: Sam Karaoke and the New Jack Band, 10 p.m. FREE. Mondays: Live band Karaoke, 10 p.m. FREE. Wednesdays: Live band "Rockstar Karaoke," 9 p.m. FREE. Dec. 8: The Soul Strippers, 10 p.m. FREE. Dec. 9: The Soul Strippers, 10 p.m. FREE. Dec. 10: The Soul Strippers, 10 p.m. FREE. Dec. 11: The Soul Strippers, 10 p.m. FREE. Dec. 12: The Soul Strippers, 10 p.m. FREE. Dec. 13: The Soul Strippers, 10 p.m. FREE. Dec. 14: The Soul Strippers, 10 p.m. FREE. Dec. 15: The Soul Strippers, 10 p.m. FREE. Dec. 16: The Soul Strippers, 10 p.m. FREE. Dec. 17: The Soul Strippers, 10 p.m. FREE.

BRIGHTON BEACH

National Restaurant

273 Brighton Beach Ave. at Brighton Second Street in Brighton Beach (718) 446-1225.
www.nationalrestaurant.com

Saturdays: Live Russian music and dance show, 9 p.m. FREE. (with \$65 private dinner). Fridays: Live Russian music and dance show, 9 p.m. FREE. (with \$50 private dinner). Sundays: Live Russian music and dance show, 9 p.m. FREE. (with \$50 private dinner).

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

Magnetic Field

97 Atlantic Ave. at Henry Street in Brooklyn Heights (718) 534-0095.
www.magneticfield.com

Dec. 8: The Aloha, 10 p.m. \$5. Dec. 9: The Aloha, 10 p.m. \$5. Dec. 10: The Aloha, 10 p.m. \$5. Dec. 11: The Aloha, 10 p.m. \$5. Dec. 12: The Aloha, 10 p.m. \$5. Dec. 13: The Aloha, 10 p.m. \$5. Dec. 14: The Aloha, 10 p.m. \$5. Dec. 15: The Aloha, 10 p.m. \$5. Dec. 16: The Aloha, 10 p.m. \$5. Dec. 17: The Aloha, 10 p.m. \$5.

CLINTON HILL

Five Spot Restaurant

459 Myrtle Ave. at Washington Avenue in Clinton Hill (718) 852-0022.
www.fivespotrestaurant.com

Saturdays: DJ Aki, 9 p.m. FREE. Mondays: DJ Aki, 9 p.m. FREE. Tuesdays: DJ Aki, 9 p.m. FREE. Wednesdays: DJ Aki, 9 p.m. FREE. Thursdays: DJ Aki, 9 p.m. FREE. Fridays: DJ Aki, 9 p.m. FREE. Saturdays: DJ Aki, 9 p.m. FREE. Sundays: DJ Aki, 9 p.m. FREE.

GRAND DAKAR Cafe

Grand Dakar Cafe

285 Grand Ave. at Lafayette Avenue in Clinton Hill (718) 398-8900.
www.granddakar.com

Saturdays: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 8: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10.

DUMBO

Five Front

5 Front St. at Old Fulton Street in DUMBO (718) 625-5559.
www.fivefrontrestaurant.com

Fridays: Live music, 8 p.m. FREE. Saturdays: Live music, 8 p.m. FREE. Sundays: Live music, 8 p.m. FREE.

FLATBUSH

Vox Pop

1022 Coney Island Rd. at Stratford Road in Flatbush (718) 460-2094.
www.voxpop.net

Sundays: Open mic, 7 p.m. FREE. With two-drink/one-night minimum. Dec. 11: Nicka Murrell, 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: Nicka Murrell, 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: Nicka Murrell, 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: Nicka Murrell, 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: Nicka Murrell, 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: Nicka Murrell, 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: Nicka Murrell, 8 p.m. \$10.

FORT GREENE

BAF Cafe

30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene (718) 636-4100.
www.bafcafe.com

Saturdays: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 8: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: Rhonda Benet, funk, jazz, soul, 10 p.m. \$10.

WILMINGTON

Night of the Cookers

767 Fulton St. at South Portland Avenue in Fort Greene (718) 797-1197.
www.nightofthecookers.com

Saturdays: Live jazz, 10 p.m. FREE. Thursdays: Live jazz, 10 p.m. FREE. Fridays: Live jazz, 10 p.m. FREE.

GOWANUS

Issue Project Room

235 Third St. at Third Street in Gowanus (718) 303-0113.
www.issueprojectroom.org

Dec. 8: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10.

GREENWICH

Club Europa

80 Mulrooney Ave. at Manhattan Avenue in Greenwich (718) 383-7222.
www.club.europa.com

Saturdays: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 8: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: Live jazz, 10 p.m. \$10.

MANHATTAN

Greenpoint

Dec. 8: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10.

MIDTOWN

Good Coffeehouse

Dec. 8: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10.

ROCKAWAY

Two Boots Brooklyn

Dec. 8: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10.

SOHO

Studio B

Dec. 8: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10.

STUYVESANT

Patio Lounge

Dec. 8: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10.

TRISTAR

Kitchen Bar

Dec. 8: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10.

WILMINGTON

Living Room Lounge

Dec. 8: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 9: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 10: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 11: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 12: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 13: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 14: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 15: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 16: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10. Dec. 17: The New "New Wave," 8 p.m. \$10.

WILMINGTON

Barbes

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Prospect Heights

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Older the better

Three Italian bistros claim boro seniority

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

The death in October of Nick Monte, a former owner of Monte's Venetian Room, stirred up a debate that has never been publicly resolved: what is the borough's oldest Italian restaurant?

At least three eateries make the claim: In the red corner, weighing in at 101 years is Monte's, a Carroll Street eatery whose exterior is graced with a carpeting that reads, "Brooklyn's Oldest Italian Restaurant" (and whose cheesecake is said to be better than you know whose).

In the green corner, is Ferdinando's Focacceria, a Union Street institution that says it opened in 1904 and has lasted longer than the local dockworkers it used to feed with its hearty Sicilian fare.

And in the white corner, is Bamente's, a "red sauce" joint on Williamsburg's Withers Street, whose owner has a deed that he claims shows that the restaurant has been in business since 1900.

Brooklyn foodies and historians ought to know the definitive truth, so the Brooklyn Paper undertook an exhaustive quest. Our results are murky, but one thing appears certain: Monte's claim isn't worth the doornail it's written on.

Indeed, current owner, Tony Monte, does not possess any documents going back to 1906, when the nearby Gowanus Canal was brimming with boats, or any other proof that his restaurant is older than Ferdinando's and Bamente's.

Instead, Monte's has been able to cling to the self-proclaimed distinction partly because of doubt in the historical record, but mostly because the owners at Ferdinando's and Bamente's don't seem to care.

"If people are gonna come, they're



From top, Bamente's, Ferdinando's and Monte's all claim to be Brooklyn's oldest Italian restaurant.

gonna come," said Francesco Buffa, the current owner of Ferdinando's, who prefers recognition for his squid-ink pasta and the transcendent panelle sandwich.

So if Monte's doesn't at least get bragging rights, it may have naming rights. Both Bamente's and Ferdinando's opened under different names at various times. Ferdinando's, for instance, was "Paul's Focacceria" until 1960.

City and state records are no help. The city Department of Buildings does not have certificates of occupancy for Ferdinando's and Monte's. (It did have a COE from 1927 for Bamente's.)

The state Department of Taxation is no better. Even if it could find paper records from the early 1900s, it wouldn't be able to reveal their existence because of privacy rules.

The most definitive piece of information came from Anthony Bamente, who says he has the original deed to the Withers Street building from 1900 (see photo).

Still Monte's doesn't concede an inch, because the deed doesn't necessarily mean that the building cited in the deed actually housed a restaurant.

And the April 7, 1900 edition of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle reported that Pasquale Bamente said his recently acquired plot on Withers would become the Liberty Hall, the restaurant's original name.

In our heart, we know we are older. Other people can say what they want," said Tony Monte, the Venetian Room's owner.

Monte's words reminded Bamente of conversations he used to have with Nick Monte about the sign.

"If that's what you say, no hard feelings," said Anthony Bamente, about the sign at the Venetian Room. "It's what you produce that counts."

Oldies but goodies

At least three venerable Brooklyn eateries claim to be the oldest Italian restaurant in the borough. But how do they stack up? See our handy guide:

RESTAURANT	BAMONTE'S	MONTE'S VENETIAN ROOM	FERDINANDO'S FOCACERIA
Address	32 Withers St., at Union Avenue	451 Carroll St., between Nevins Street and Third Avenue	151 Union St., between Hicks and Columbia streets
Neighborhood	Williamsburg	Gowanus	Carroll Gardens
Year opened	1900 — and Anthony Bamente, the owner, has the deed to prove it.	1906	1904
Still in the family?	Yes. Anthony's grandparents opened it.	Sort of. Tony Monte took over the restaurant from his godfather Angelo Monte and his four brothers, in 1994. Their father was the original owner.	Ferdinando Siaramitaro bought it in 1960 from his boss Paul Bensante (when it was called Paul's Focacceria).
Changes over time	Gone are the catering hall, the bocce courts, and two earlier names. The restaurant opened as the Liberty Hall and, in the 1940s, it was the Withers Bar and Grill.	Just the staff's dress code, which "went from vest and tie to golf shirts."	Started as a lunch place catering to dockworkers. Now there are later hours and a full Sicilian menu.
Italian origins	Salerno, near Naples	Sant'Angelo dei Lombardi, near Naples	Palermo, Sicily
House specialties	Mussels marinara, linguini with crab sauce	Italian cheesecake and giambotta (a peasant dish of chicken, sausage, potatoes and peppers)	Panele sandwich (deep-fried mashed chickpeas topped with fresh ricotta), and pasta con sarde (spaghetti with sardines, fennel and pine nuts).
Famous moments	The restaurant was twice filmed in — what else? — "The Sopranos," as well as "Kojak." And "Joe DiMaggio would fly into New York and his first stop was Bamente's," said Lisa Bamente.	"Sammy Davis Jr. walked in with 39 people from the Capacabana and they put on a show," with the three-piece house band. "He sang, he danced, he drank and tipped everyone who went by."	Martin Scorsese filmed parts of "The Departed" here.

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Santa on Atlantic

Santa and 1-year-old Victoria Fisher from Boerum Hill enjoy the lighting of the Atlantic Avenue tree at the Belarussian Church at Bond Street, sponsored by the Atlantic Avenue Local Development Corporation and Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association.

BIAS CLAIM...

Continued from page 1

Adkins did not return an e-mail seeking an additional comment. A spokesman in the Borough President's office said Adkins would not be available to comment.

The suit is seeking unspecified damages, including lost wages, lost retirement income, compensation for pain and suffering and punitive damages against Markowitz and his office for multiple violations of the city's Human Rights Law.

Weiss, who once worked for Markowitz's predecessor, Howard Golden, joined Markowitz's team as a speechwriter in July 2003. But soon after, the borough president announced a round of "seniority-based staff layoffs" and, since she was a recent hire, she opted to leave on her own volition before the cuts were made.

But while Weiss was working at another public relations job, Markowitz courted her to return, promising a promotion to communications director, court papers say.

Weiss took that job in late 2004 — but was immediately "subjected to unlawful treatment" by Adkins that was based, she said, on her gender.

Some of the charges in Weiss's suit read like the overblown grossing of a disgruntled employee. She complains that Adkins, her boss, "indefensibly insisted on micro-managing" and "was compelled to supervise her every move," and added that Adkins lavished praise on male employees, yet never on her.

But the legal papers make a much more serious claim that Weiss's communication team "was being misused for political purposes during a year (2005) when the borough president was running for re-election." She said that Adkins told her in January 2006 that she was asked to resign because the office needed someone "who can test the political waters."

Weiss also alleges that after she left the borough president's office, another employee told her union shop steward that she "was being subjected to a hostile work environment due to inappropriate sexual activity taking place in the executive office among Adkins and three other staff members."

The court papers do not explain the activity, and Weiss's lawyer, Jack Tucker, refused to elaborate, saying the allegation occurred after Weiss had left the office.

Tucker was more forthcoming about Weiss's allegation that she did political work for Markowitz during his re-election year. Tucker said the work included prepping the Bep for debates and reviewing campaign literature. He called it "a fairly significant distraction" from her official duties.

If true, it would be more than a distraction for Markowitz, who is apparently still considering a run for mayor. Using city workers for campaign purposes is illegal, though Tucker was quick to say that the "alleged misuse of public employees" and the "allusion to sexual goings on" is not part of this case.

"It's contextual. It shows the broader hostile work environment," he said. "It shows how this office conducts itself on ethical and human rights issues."

Weiss declined to discuss her case, but issued a statement saying, "My career and my self-confidence have been hugely damaged by the discriminatory and disparaging treatment I endured at Brooklyn Borough Hall. I cannot let that stand."

YOUTUBE...

Continued from page 1

many years. Illegals have no rights, they should be deported. "I asked the question that I did because I was annoyed by reports about illegals in Bensonhurst and Bath Beach cat-calling women and urinating in public. They take over pockets of areas, ruin the neighborhood, and lower the quality of life."

Nardi's question has generated controversy all over the country — but mostly in the form of people e-mailing him to call him a bigot. "You are wholly ignorant of the issues at stake," wrote one anonymous poster, adding that Nardi is "a dinosaur nationalist that needs to keep his mouth shut and keep his hateful comments to himself."

But Ernie Nardi doesn't mind (if he did, he wouldn't be Ernie Nardi). "I put Dyker Heights on the national radar and I'm glad my message is out," he said.

Part of his message, by the way, is that he favors legal immigration — for anyone who has "a desire to assimilate" when he or she gets here.

OUR OPINION

Big win on Duffield St.

Who said you can't fight City Hall? Duffield Street homeowner Joy Chatel — whose house was set to be seized by the Bloomberg Administration to be torn down for a parking garage despite its link to the Underground Railroad — did fight the city. And last week, she won.

Thanks to a persuasive judge, the city agreed to end its attempt to seize Chatel's Duffield Street home by eminent domain and has already begun the process of redesigning the public space that Joe Chan, president of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, envisions as a Bryant Park-styled gathering place in the heart of a booming Downtown Brooklyn.

Planners may be correct in their assertion that Downtown will need that kind of open greenspace — especially given what a bad job a prior generation of planners did at the walked-in Metrotech. But the city's years-long

effort to grab Chatel's history-laden home made a mockery of legitimate use of the power of eminent domain, and we're glad that the city has finally agreed to back off.

Earlier this year, we took a cynical view of the city's symbolic co-naming of Duffield Street as "Abolitionist Place" and its promise of \$2 million towards commemorating the anti-slavery history that took place Downtown. Given that the city was planning to tear down Chatel's house to make room for Willoughby Square Park, those efforts seemed particularly ironic.

But now that Chatel's house has been saved, there is a unique opportunity for the city to realize not only the vision of a world-class urban gathering space, but also the stated desire to honor Brooklyn's Abolitionist past.

Because Chatel's home will occupy the southwest corner of Willoughby Square

Park, we urge the park's still-unnamed designers to actually incorporate the home into their blueprints. We've long thought that a museum would be perfect on the site, given that prominent Abolitionists owned some houses on the block, which are connected by underground tunnels that may have been used by fugitive slaves.

With Chatel's great victory comes a great responsibility.

Because the city will no longer seize her home and demolish it to make way for the park, it now falls upon Joy Chatel to do the right thing and allow the city to buy her building to be turned into that very museum.

It would be pretty ironic if the city had to threaten eminent domain again — this time to seize Chatel's home for the public benefit of an Abolitionism museum instead of a parking garage for Downtown workers.

ALL DRAWN OUT



LETTERS

What's with Paper's pro-Thor Coney coverage?

To the editor:

It's hard to understand how a newspaper that's been so spot on about Atlantic Yards can be so obtuse when it comes to Coney Island redevelopment. Particularly inexplicable is your consistently Thor Equities-friendly editorial line ("Hypocrisy on Coney," editorial, Nov. 24).

Let's review Thor's record in Coney Island thus far: The company decided to buy up a functioning amusement district, then turned around and said there's no money to be made in amusements, insisting on a zoning change so it could erect lucrative high-rise buildings.

In exchange, Thor was willing to build new amusements on the remaining land to replace the already-operating ones that it planned to evict. (Talk about nerve!) Then, to add insult to injury, Thor bullied Coney's

merchants by inserting gag orders into their leases to prevent them from speaking out about the area's future.

Certainly, there are legitimate questions to be raised about Mayor Bloomberg's recently announced plan for Coney Island, and your editorial notes some of them. But it's important to also recognize that the mayor's proposal to designate Coney's amusement district as parkland is a response to a very urgent concern. It's a way of permanently protecting this storied seaside playground from rapacious developers, such as Thor, who see Coney Island's amusement district as little more than prime oceanfront real estate waiting to be turned into high rises.

This issue notwithstanding, I love The Brooklyn Paper.

Daniel Treiman, Windsor Terrace

To the editors:

In the "Hypocrisy in Coney" editorial, The Brooklyn Paper continues to assert that the proposal to designate parkland in Coney Island constitutes eminent domain. However, mapping parkland on private property is not a new idea and has precedent in New York State. Possibly the most famous example of privately mapped parkland is within the six-million-acre Adirondack State Park.

Approximately 3.4 million acres of this park is privately held but regulated by the Adirondack Park Agency. In addition, 130,000 people live and operate businesses

year-round in 105 towns within the park.

While property in this situation is encumbered by the parks designation, the owners still own, maintain, and operate their property, and are able to pass it along to their families or sell to new owners.

According to the city, the parks designation would not be any more restrictive than the underlying zoning. Furthermore, changes proposed to the underlying zoning, even with the parks designation, would actually allow more types of uses than are currently permitted, such as sit-down restaurants, which are now prohibited.

Currently, the city's proposal does not condemn property, or force owners to sell; the proposal also indicates that the existing amusement zoning would be opened up to permit more types of development. More important, the city's proposal calls for a minimum of 15 acres of open space reserved in perpetuity for amusements and amusement related uses, while permitting new development elsewhere in Coney Island.

David Gratt, Coney Island
The writer is a managing director of Coney Island USA, which operates the Mermad Parade.

Another row on Row

To the editor:

Your recent article on the Admirals Row homes at the Brooklyn Navy Yard ("Ths 'Admiral' is demoted," Nov. 17) is at best uninformed, and at worst offensive to the

community I represent.

For 20 years, the Navy Yard, with the support of Community Board 2 and elected officials at every level, has made it clear that the most appropriate use of this site is for a major supermarket that will serve local residents, particularly the 10,000 residents of Fargut. Walt Whitman, and Ingersoll Houses who have no convenient access to fresh produce.

These are the folks who have the most to benefit from this much-needed community resource. It is disrespectful to claim that the supermarket is planned "so that contemporary Brooklynites can have yet one more place to buy tomatoes."

Did you talk to any residents of Fargut houses about what it has been like to live across the street from this unsafe eyesore? Did you ask them if they believe a supermarket on that site would be "one more place to buy tomatoes?"

I've stood shoulder to shoulder with preservationists on many fights. The reality is that the Admirals Row homes are too far gone.

The Navy Yard has a responsible plan to bring a supermarket, industrial space, and its employment center to the site while creating 500 jobs. Your claim that the Navy Yard seeks to "pave over history and move on" simply lacks credibility. Every day in the Yard, historic structures are being preserved and reused for their original industrial purpose.

Letitia James, Fort Greene
The writer is the Democratic Councilwoman from Fort Greene.

Yards not safe

To the editor:

Gore Vidal once called the U.S.A. the "United States of Amnesia," and the way the governor's office, the Empire State Development Corporation and Forest City Ratner are treating the terror threat at the proposed Atlantic Yards, it seems like they have forgotten that a lot of Brooklynites lived through 9-11 ("Pols want Atlantic Yards security review," Nov. 10).

Is Forest City Ratner depending on our forgetting that the World Trade Center had its own world-class security firm certifying its safety? The NYPD also says it is satisfied with the "secret plan" to prevent terrorism at Atlantic Yards. We are also, apparently, supposed to forget that the same NYPD regarded the twin towers as safe.

Are we going to be safe with a stadium built right on Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues? After all, the project would be built as a result of no-bid contracts between major corporations and government.

Oops, I almost forgot: Motorola's no-bid contract for firemen's radios resulted in the loss of hundreds of good men.

If Atlantic Yards is built wrong and attacked, we're all going to have a lot more to regret about.

Steve DeSeve, Brooklyn Heights

Stuffed and happy

To the editor:

As one of the winners of The Brooklyn Paper's "Big Turkey" contest, I just want to say a big thank you for a memorable Thanksgiving, celebrated with friends — and family, courtesy of the generosity of your sponsors [live Turkey, Greene Grape and Baked].

I became a minor celebrity with my students, recognized in Prospect Park by fellow dog owners, pointed to by neighbors. Everybody asked how everything was and my answer was always FANTASTIC.

Though I have never patronized any of those businesses before, I will now and so will the people I loved to. The live turkey was so juicy, the yam bruce was yummy. We thought we had two of the same pies from Baked, so we only served one, pumpkin. The next day we realized with great joy that we had a sweet potato pie all to ourselves!

And the wine was divine: the Sobon organic Zinfandel was a hit, as was the Ramon Pinot Gris — both wines that I never would have tried. I felt very fortunate to have such a delicious feast and celebration WITH NO PREPARATION! Thanks again.

Sydelle Freed, Park Slope

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MYRTLE VENTURE LLC, App., for Auth., filed with NY Sec. of State ("SSNY") 09/14/2007, Office in Kings County; LLC formed in DE on 06/05/2007. SSNY designated agent for service of process with copy mailed to The LLC, c/o BFC Partners, 325 Gold Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201 All lawful business purposes.

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